Title: “TAKING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE”: A CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY OF H.E TEACHER PRACTICE ENACTMENTS AT A UK LANDBASED COLLEGE

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“TAKING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE”: A CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY OF H.E. TEACHER PRACTICE ENACTMENTS AT A UK LANDBASED COLLEGE

by

Eve Rapley

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2017

Academic Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

I, EVE RAPLEY

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

"TAKING THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE": A CONSTRUCTIVIST

GROUNDED THEORY OF H.E. TEACHER PRACTICE ENACTMENTS AT A UK

LANDBASED COLLEGE

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;

2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;

3. Where I have cited the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;

4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;

6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;

7. Parts of this work have been published as indicated on p.19 (Rapley, 2017) and pp.16, 359 and 386 (Rapley, 2014).

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Date: 28th September 2017

Abstract

Landbased Studies Foundation and Bachelor degrees (FD and BSc) are generally taught in specialist FE landbased colleges, with teachers typically teaching both FE (Ofqual RQF Levels 0–3) and HE (Ofqual RQF Levels 4–6). Such teachers are designated in the literature as being HE in FE (Higher Education in Further Education) or CBHE (College Based Higher Education) teachers.

Using a single case study landbased college, this study adopts a qualitative, naturalistic methodology using intensive interviewing and classroom observations of six Animal, Equine and Veterinary Nursing Studies HE in FE teachers. Characterised as an under-represented group within UK education research, these teachers teach both HE and FE within a small, UK landbased college.

The study examines the nature of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments, and factors which enable and constrain them within an FE college environment. Conceived within a interpretivist socio-constructivist framework, this study is influenced by the anti-dualist social philosophy of Practice Theory (PT) whereby people, places and material objects all contribute to how practice is enacted. Rather than considering material artefacts to be merely background objects and a college being simply an inert container where teaching takes place, a *sensitivity* to Practice Theory considers the FE context, material aspects and teacher pedagogic practices as a whole, rather than from one or other side of the structure versus agency divide. Within this study a particular variant of Practice Theory, Practice Architectures (PA) (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008), has been used to sensitise the study.

The study adopts a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach as a means of exploring a neglected and under-theorised area of Post-Compulsory education. The CGT methodology influenced and guided the research design and interpretive data

analysis. Using purposive sampling of teacher participants, theoretical sampling, and the iterative cycles of constant comparison associated with Grounded Theory (GT), the data was used to construct four key categories. From these categories three main theoretical themes were identified from the data; Surveillance and Control, Teacher Identity and Agency, and Pedagogic Risk Aversion.

The interpretive analysis suggests that HE pedagogic practice enactments are influenced and constrained by the college as a site, by its management, and by the wider neoliberal landscape of surveillance and auditing, as well as by the teachers themselves, the HE students, and material, non-human physical spaces and artefacts. The resultant HE pedagogic practice enactments are risk averse, tending towards instrumentalism and teacher-centeredness.

The final CGT theoretically accounts for the HE practice enactments of the HE in FE teachers at the college and is discussed in relation to HE in FE literature, and to a number of pertinent theories within and beyond education. The CGT contributes to an enhanced understanding of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments, and has potential for generalisability beyond the specific college. The original contributions to knowledge consists of: devising a novel methodology whereby PT/PA and CGT are articulated; adding to the body of literature for HE in FE pedagogy; and adding to the pauce corpus of literature for landbased education.

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Finally, thanks to Dr Peter Norrington for his invaluable guidance with matters concerning proofing, editing and preparation of this thesis for submission.

Outputs from this study

Rapley, E (2017) *'Unearthing, uncovering and understanding'. Entwining ethnography with practice theory and constructivist grounded theory to explore HE teacher practice enactments in an FE landbased college.* Paper presented at the Ethnography and Education conference, September 12, 2017, New College, Oxford University.

Rapley, E (2017) "Seeing the light". Personal epiphanies and moving towards interpretivism; a researcher's tale of exploring teacher pedagogic practice. *Ethnography and Education,* 19/4/2017 DOI: 10.1080/17457823.2017.1315311..

Rapley, E (2017) "*Personal epiphanies and seeing the world afresh; Developing a qualitative research methodology to explore higher education teacher pedagogic practices in a UK landbased college*". Invited session chair and presenter at the European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, 7–9 February, 2017, University of Leuven, Belgium.

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Rapley, E (2016) *"A new way of doing, a new was of seeing". Developing a novel qualitative research methodology to explore HE pedagogic practices of HE in FE teachers within a UK Land Based college*. Paper presented at the 2nd International Research in Post-Compulsory Education (ARPCE) conference, July 9, 2016, Harris Manchester College, Oxford University.

Rapley, E (2016) *Is the grass greener? Experiences of HE students in an FE Land Based college*. Poster at BERA workshop event, May 25, 2016, Bedford.

Rapley, E (2016) *Methodological melding and mixing* – Using *Practice Theory and Grounded Theory to research post-compulsory education*. Poster at BERA workshop event, May 25, 2016, Bedford

Rapley, E (2014) *The lives of others; exploring the lived experience of HE in FE Animal/Equine Studies lecturers within an FE Land Based College*. Paper presented at international FERA conference July 12, 2014, Harris Manchester College, Oxford University.

Rapley, E (2014) *Real Deal? Or Raw Deal? Higher Education Students in a Land Based Further Education College - Experiences Explored* (poster) University of Bedfordshire Conference. Innovation: Making it happen, Bedford, 1 July, 2014.

Rapley, E (2014) Horses for courses, or a grumble in the jungle? HE in FE student perceptions of the HE experience in a Land Based college *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 19 (2), pp.194-211.

Rapley, E (2014) *Horses for courses, or a grumble in the jungle? HE in FE student perceptions of the HE experience in a Land Based college*. Poster presentation at SEDA national conference May 15th 2014, Newcastle.

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Glossary

ANT	Actor-Network Theory
AoC	Association of Colleges
ATI	Approaches to Teaching Inventory
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BHS	British Horse Society
BIS	Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
BSc	Bachelor of Science Degree
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBHE	College Based Higher Education
CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CHE	College Higher Education
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FD	First Diploma (BTEC award)
FDAP	Foundation Degree Awarding Powers
FdSc	Foundation Degree (Science)
FE	Further Education
FEC	Further Education College
HE	Higher Education
HE in FE	Higher Education in Further Education
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council in England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HER	Higher Education Review
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IQER	Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review
KIS	Key Information Set

LANTRA	Sector Skills Council for Landbased and Environmental training courses and qualifications
LBC	Landbased College
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSDA	Learning and Skills Development Agency
LSIS	Learning and Skills Improvement Service
MEG	Mixed Economy Group
ND	National Diploma (BTEC award)
NPM	New Public Management
NSS	National Student Survey
OfSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PA	Practice Architectures
PT	Practice Theory
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RCVS	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
RQF	Regulated Qualifications Framework
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
STS	Science Technology Studies
TDAP	Taught Degree Awarding Powers
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UK SIC	UK Standard Industrial Classification
UKPSF	UK Professional Standards Framework
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VN	Veterinary Nurse
WP	Widening Participation

Chapter 1: Overview of the Study

1.1 Background

This thesis presents a qualitative research study exploring the pedagogic practice enactments of higher education (HE) teachers at Shireland College[1], a UK further education (FE) landbased college (LBC). The study used a modified version of Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) to construct a substantive grounded theory – "Taking the path of least resistance" – to theoretically best account for HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment at the college.

Using a single college the study was situated within the interpretivist paradigm. A naturalistic, ethnographic approach was taken as a means of gathering rich observation data and first hand accounts from higher education in further education (HE in FE) teachers in order to theorise pedagogic practice enactments.

Further, the study was sensitised with broad notions of practice as espoused by anti-dualist social philosophies of Schatzki (2001) (site ontology) and Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) (Practice Architectures). Inspired and informed by their conceptions of practice theory (PT) and of sociomaterialism, the study sought to explore teacher practice enactments with specific attention paid to people, as well as physical places and non-human material objects and artefacts.

By virtue of being a CGT where participant voices feature strongly, I followed Burton and Steane (2004) by writing in a style that includes substantial quotations from participants and from the literature. This style also includes first person writing. Given that this thesis is positioned within the interpretivist paradigm, I am not writing from an objective, neutral stance (Kuo, 2008). Rather, I use my subjectivity and reflexivity to render participant narratives into an "analytic story" (Nelson, 2015, p.23). By writing in the first person I further contend that my ownership of the interpretive

[1] * Shireland College is a pseudonym used to preserve the identity of the research site.

analysis elements of the study is heightened. By writing in the first person, the ways in which I reached my analytic interpretations and conclusions are made clear (Frost et al., 2010).

This chapter introduces the aims and purpose of the study, presents the research question, provides essential context and definitions, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Objective of the study

The objective of the study is to construct a CGT to theoretically best account for HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College. Although focused on one college the study has the potential for generalisability both within other LBCs and within general HE in FE settings.

1.3 Key definitions – Further Education (FE), Higher Education (HE), Higher Education in Further Education (HE in FE) and the UK FE sector

HE in FE is HE that is situated in, and operates from an FEC context, not from within a university context. In order to situate the study within the UK post-16 education landscape, I briefly present relevant historical aspects, definitions and broad conceptions of FE, HE and HE in FE that inform this study. As part of this process of definition, broad characteristics of students within FE and from HE in FE are presented.

The UK FE sector is “diverse, rich and a fast changing landscape” (Duckworth, 2014, p.41). It is complex and, like arguably all sectors of UK education, it operates not within an insulated vacuum, but increasingly within an environment that is influenced by a narrative of competition, marketization, instability and globalisation (Keep, 2011).

Whilst FE colleges make up the majority of the sector and provide the mainstay of vocational education in the UK, the FE sector is acknowledged as increasingly being a mixed-economy sector with "public, private, and voluntary sector providers" (Simmons, 2016, p.693) all contributing to it. In terms of its size and scope, it is a significant sector, one that is "central to the English post-16 education and vocational training system" (Norton, 2012, p.1). Its centrality regards that of providing skills for a competitive world (Thompson, 2009). Despite its size and significance FE has been characterised in the literature as being "under-valued…for over a 100 years" (Unwin and Bailey, 2014, p.449). FE is often referred to as the 'Cinderella' of the wider English education landscape due to inadequate funding, funding cuts and neglect (Tummons and Ingleby, 2014). Indeed, Coffield et al. (2008) remarked how "desperately important" (p.4) FE is, but described it as being "turbulent [and] insecure" (ibid.).

According to recent data from the Association of Colleges (AoC) (November 2017), the FE sector in the UK accounts for 2.2 million students, with 1.4 million being adult learners and 712,000 being aged 16–18 (AoC, 2018). FE also includes students' aged 14–16 who study a full-time vocational qualification along with English and mathematics (ESFA, 2017). In 2015/2016, income allocated to FE in England was £7 billion, with 50 per cent coming from the Department for Education (DfE) 16–18 funds, 25 per cent coming from DfE funds for adult education and apprenticeships, and the remainder from sources including fees, grants and other funding bodies (AoC, 2018). Despite the high student numbers quoted, Hodgson and Spours (2017) contend that for 16–18 year–old FE students in England, FE is currently in "stasis" as a result of "the impact of government policy since 2010; notably academisation and the growing of school sixth forms" (p.3). They further remark how numbers of adult learners in FE has declined, characterising the drop as "dramatic" (ibid).

Students in FE can study at any one of the 280 FECs that currently exist in England. Of these, 186 are designated as being general FECs, with the remainder being comprised of specialist FE colleges (e.g. landbased, art, performing arts) (AoC, 2018). The FE sector broadly specialises in the provision of vocational, professional and technical training and education (ibid.), offering a range of programmes including GCSEs and A–Levels, employability and functional skills, work-based learning (WBL), social and leisure classes, adult literacy and numeracy, apprenticeships and HE. Given the range of programmes and the range of students, FECs are inclusive and often very diverse places, whereby 16-year-old vocational students can study alongside mature, adult students on an undergraduate programme (Tummons and Ingleby, 2014). But broadly, FECs are "essentially teaching-only establishments, with most of their funding keyed to provision at Levels 3, 2, 1 and Entry Level" (Parry, 2012, p.52) (Appendix 1), with a broad employment focus towards the development of skills for work (Tummons et al., 2013). Since 2001, FECs, like schools, have been subject to a regime of inspection from The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) (Hodgson et al., 2011).

The diversity of FE extends beyond the range of provision. Tummons and Ingleby (2014) further suggest students and teachers within FE can also be characterised by diversity. Teachers in FE could have doctoral qualifications. Conversely, they could be vocational teachers from backgrounds such as 'painting and decorating'. Similarly, some will have teacher training qualifications, whilst others will not (Tummons and Ingleby, 2014). Irrespective of their background, Pleasance (2016) maintains that a perceived strength of FE is the "commitment to learners that teachers bring to their role" (p.13). She further characterises FE in terms of its "ethos of support, encouragement, choice and challenge" for those who are part of it (ibid).

Like FE teachers, students entering FE often have diverse backgrounds. Students are likely to enter FE for a range of reasons, and often enter with diverse needs. Indeed, Avis (2016) reminds that it is "important to acknowledge the heterogeneity of students" in FE (p.93). The literature often casts FE along class lines and characterises FECs and FE students as working-class (Thompson, 2009). Low status and a lack of understanding of FE, coupled with lower esteem afforded to vocational education has implications for sustaining difference in social positioning and identity (Avis, 2016; Hill et al., 2016).

The heterogeneity of FE can often be overshadowed by its association with "disaffected and demotivated young people and adults" (Smith and Swift, 2014, p.258). But Duckworth (2014) suggests FE can provide a "second chance" (p.3) for those that the school system has let down. Further, FE also provides important opportunities to those returning to education after a break, those aspiring to undertake degree level or professional qualification studies, and those looking to change career or upskill (McLay et al., 2010). FE also contributes to an agenda of social justice by "facilitating social mobility of those drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds" (Avis, 2016, p.85), by offering transformatory opportunities for learners looking to develop themselves, their identities, to gain empowerment and to improve their life (and employment) prospects (Duckworth and Smith, 2017). The FE sector also has a "vital role in vocational and community education" (Duckworth, 2014, p.3), in meeting the needs of local communities (O'Leary and Rami, 2017) and of fostering local and regional level partnerships with employers (Hodgson and Spours, 2017).

Like the FE sector, HE is complex and diverse. In terms of the broad aim of HE the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) suggests it enables students to "develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking" (QAA, 2012, p.6). To achieve

this, the QAA state “scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education” (QAA, p.13). Currently, the HE sector largely offers programmes of study at RQF Levels 4-8 (Appendix 1).

Traditionally the preserve of an elite few, the HE sector was historically occupied by universities concerned with academic subjects and research, and the provision of education for entering the professions (Bathmaker, 2003). In contrast, the current HE landscape consists of many more providers of HE, including universities, FE colleges and private providers. The sector has undergone a period of rapid expansion and has shifted from being an elite to a mass-participation sector (Giannakis and Bullivant, 2016). Recent figures from Universities UK (2017) reported 2.28 million students were studying HE in one of 162 HE institutions (excluding FECs) funded through a UK funding council (2015–16), with Honours and Foundation Degree programmes accounting for around 75 per cent of provision.

The publication of the Robbins Report in 1963 paved the way for HE to be ‘opened up’ and precipitated the move towards the mass participation model of HE seen today. Prompted in part by post-war principles of enhancing social mobility and equality, the Robbins Report increased participation and the number of institutions providing HE (Bathmaker, 2003). Economic growth and the demand for productivity and skills was also implicated in driving change (Marginson, 2016).

The desire to increase student numbers in HE gained significant momentum in the 1990s. Under the Blair New Labour government, HE was given a pivotal role in widening participation (WP) by “increasing participation by young people from low income families and traditionally low participation areas” (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013, p.6). A target of 50 per cent of 18 to 30 years olds to be part of the HE system by 2010 was set. The agenda to increase participation also coincided with political

and global imperatives to the enhance skills (and productivity) of the workforce as a means of maintaining economic competitiveness (Holmes, 2006).

Like FE, HE is influenced by the same discourse of competition, marketization, instability and globalisation (Keep, 2011). The demand for a "high skills, knowledge-driven economy" (Bathmaker et al., 2016, p.27) has led to a significant reworking of the fundamental nature and purposes HE to frame it as a sector of enterprise (Clegg, 2010). Therefore, whilst HE and universities were historically seats of learning with a purely academic and research focus, and FE was concerned with vocational subjects and skills, the two once distinct sectors have increasingly coalesced around a narrative of employability and productivity, thereby blurring the boundaries between them (Gallacher, 2006).

In the current HE sector and despite the abolition of grants and the introduction of tuition fees, Bathmaker et al. (2016) suggest how a degree is now viewed as being a "sound investment" (p.2) and is increasingly perceived as being essential to ensuring individual financial and career prosperity. The introduction of fees has been argued as being negative in terms of commodifying HE and changing relationships between students and HE providers to one of transaction involving services and products to be paid for. Bathmaker et al. (2016) argue that the 'fixation' of HE providers to give students a good 'student experience' and for students and parents to demand 'value for money' has created a new dynamic and a lexicon whereby quality and metrics feature prominently. The introduction of the performance measurement into HE, e.g. National Student Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), exemplify how HE has changed its outlook in order to comply with the dominant discourse of competition and marketization that pervades the sector (Fung and Gordon, 2016). Whilst teachers in universities have traditionally held doctoral and other higher post graduate (PG) qualifications, the shift in emphasis towards 'good

quality' teaching has resulted in the imperative for obtaining a teaching qualification, i.e. Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship/PG Cert HE as part of a raft of metrics to measure quality.

Whilst the current UK HE sector is more diverse, is more socially inclusive, and is arguably less drawn upon the elite class lines of the past, it remains a stratified sector. Institutional prestige and traditional disciplines ensure "some pathways carry more value than others" (Marginson, 2016, p.415). Fisher and Simmons (2012) maintain that a deep-seated, class-based divide between the academic and the vocational creates a lack of parity of esteem between HE institutions. This manifests itself in high status degrees, e.g. medicine and law at high status institutions enjoying greater prestige than vocational HE, e.g. social work or business studies at lower status institutions. Davies (2010) suggests the HE sector is comprised of varyingly different sub-groups which occupy different positions, e.g. elite Russell Group universities at one end, so called 'new universities' (largely ex-polytechnics created post-1992 following *The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act*) the middle, and FECs occupying the lower status positions. This stratification also extends to the students within the sector. Despite the WP agenda and efforts to improve social mobility, Whitty et al. (2015) suggest that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are far more likely to pursue their HE studies in less prestigious, lower status institutions than their middle-class peers.

What this overview depicts is a complex and dynamic sector within which HE in FE is a part, albeit from an arguably 'outside' position. Straddling both the FE and the HE sector, HE in FE came to prominence as a result of policy changes in HE, chiefly the publication of the Dearing Report in 1997. This opened the door for FECs to fully enter the HE sector and to establish themselves within the broad HE landscape as providers of a distinct type of vocational HE. This emergence and development of HE

in FE is described next, as well as underlying characteristics of HE in FE and of HE in FE students.

1.4 Context for the study – HE in FE in the UK

HE in FE denotes HE study undertaken within an FEC, rather than at a university. According to Greenwood (2010b), HE in FE "refers to all those activities that relate to the management, development, delivery and assessment of higher education qualifications and programmes taught in further education colleges" (p.1). Recently HE in FE has undergone a re-designation, with some researchers adopting the term college based higher education (CBHE) or college higher education (CHE) in preference to HE in FE. However, since this study began in 2011 when HE in FE was the preferred terminology, I have continued to use this term throughout the thesis.

In common with the FE and HE sectors, HE in FE operates within, and is subject to the same marketised climate and its inherent pressures and challenges. Whilst Bell et al. (2017) caution against trying to characterise HE in FE using too broad terms, they suggest it can reasonably be described as being vocational, focused upon sub-degree provision, often with small classes (comparative to HE), with students drawn from local areas, often with teachers without research degrees, and usually operating via a collaborative arrangement with a university. With regard to broad characteristics of HE in FE teachers, Kumari (2017) suggests they have higher teaching hours, usually teach FE and HE, and are more orientated towards scholarly activity and employer engagement, rather than towards research as typically conceived of by the university sector.

In terms of students, Tummons et al. (2013) propose that, as with FE, HE in FE predominantly attracts students from working-class socio-economic backgrounds. Pleasance (2016) supports this view by asserting how HE in FE plays an important

role in WP and in enabling access into HE for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Pleasance, 2016). Tummons et al. (2013) further suggest that students from these backgrounds enter HE in FE with “lower or alternative entry profiles” (p.9) when compared to many universities. This often includes Level 3 BTEC awards rather than A-Levels (Parry et al., 2012). Whilst the literature would confirm the accuracy of these contentions, it does not necessarily reflect all HE in FE students. Stoten (2016) contends that whilst many HE in FE students chose college in order to “address earlier disadvantage” (p.17), there are those who consciously chose it in favour of the “perceived support and care available … compared with university” (ibid.). This is supported by Parry et al. (2012) who report that the “familiarity and safety of colleges’ learning environment” (p.17) was an important factor cited by students wishing to study HE in FE. Finally, HE in FE can be characterised by greater numbers of staff contact time and support and lower tuition fees (UCAS, n.d.). In comparison to universities (most of which typically charge the maximum £9000 per year for tuition fees), the average tuition fee for HE in FE is around £7,000–7,500 (Belgutay and Martin, 2017).

HE in FE has experienced a considerable increase in student numbers during the last twenty years (Kumari, 2017). The 2011 government white paper *Students at the Heart of the System* gave special recognition to HE in FE by virtue of its “particular strengths in reaching out to non-traditional higher education learners including mature and part-time students. They also have a distinctive mission particularly in delivering locally-relevant, vocational higher-level skills such as HNCs, HNDs, Foundation Degrees and Apprenticeships” (BIS, 2011, p.46).

Recent figures from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, 2017) reported 241 FECs or sixth form colleges were delivering HE, with in excess of 75 per cent of students at FECs registered on Foundation degrees, HNDs and

HNCs, rather than on 3-year Honours degrees. Figures for 2017 from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA, 2017) reported 187,115 students studied HE in FE in 2015/16 in the UK. This accounts for around 1 in 10 of HE students (Kumari, 2017), and represents a small decrease (1.5 per cent approximately) from the 189,670 enrolments in 2014/15, with full-time enrolments being affected by the reduction in students. It is part of a wider (albeit comparatively small) downward trend whereby HE in FE enrolments have declined since 2013 (HESA, 2017) (see Figure 1).

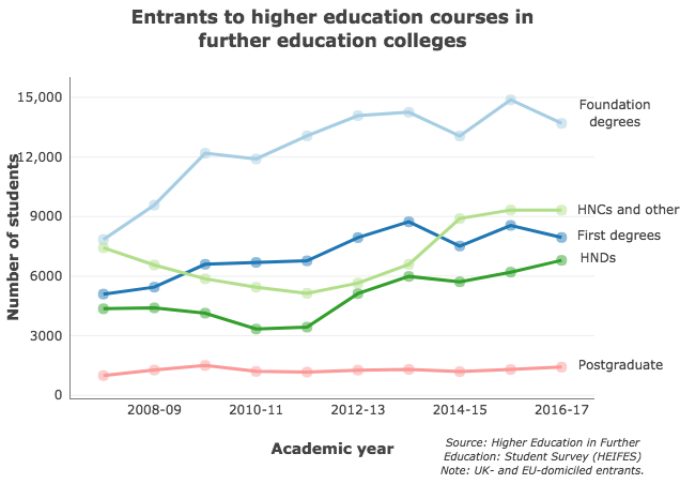

Figure 1. Entrants to HE courses in FECs (HEFCE, 2017)

These figures give a snapshot of HE in FE as it is currently constituted. Origins of its rapid growth and entry into the HE sector can (to a greater or lesser extent) be traced back to the Dearing Report published in 1997. Whilst other government policies were undoubtedly instrumental in HE in FE arriving at its current position, e.g. the Robbins Report, the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act and the Kennedy Report (1997), it was the Dearing Report that marked a sea change in HE in FE. Described by Feather (2010) as FECs being “catapulted into the forefront of HE delivery” (p.189), Dearing acknowledged the FE sector as being fundamental to the expansion of HE provision (NCIHE, 1997; Schofield and Dismore, 2010).

FECs were accorded a ‘special mission’ to increase student numbers, widen participation and build progression in support of a lifelong and diverse system of HE (Parry and Thompson, 2002). The then Secretary of State for Education, David Blunkett, talked of a “new ladder of vocational progression, leading from schools to degree level, [is] to be created to help tackle Britain's skills gap” (2001, n.p.). He described how FECs would be, “encouraged to work closely with schools and employers to build the lower rungs of the ladder, which is designed to lead on to higher education through the new foundation degrees” (ibid.).

In order to support this, short cycle Foundation Degrees (FD) were introduced with delivery focused within FECs. Prior to the creation of Foundation Degrees, HE in FE was limited with FECs delivering HE in the form of technician level qualifications such as Accounting Technicians or Legal Executives (Barr, 2011), HND/C (Higher National Diploma/Certificate) and other sub-degree provision.

Predominantly vocational in nature, Foundation degrees are typically two year, 240-credit programmes (Level 4 and 5) predicated on the development of “key skills and knowledge [which] emphasise work experience” (Schofield and Dismore, 2010, p.208). Increasingly FDs have the option of a final year (Level 6) ‘top up’ to enable students to gain a full Honours degree

Unlike universities where a broad range of disciplines and degrees are typically offered, HE in FE providers are more likely to focus on “particular subject and industry niches” (Kumari, 2017, p.45). Citing the Mixed Economy Group (MEG), Kumari (2017) reports how although there are some exceptions of large-scale colleges having thousands of HE students, HE in a small/medium FEC is unlikely to account for more than 10 per cent of the total number of students. In some cases HE student numbers can be less than ten. Unlike universities who are able to award their own degrees, the overwhelming majority of FDs are delivered at an FEC and are

awarded HE qualifications through a validated or franchise arrangement with a partner university (Simm et al., 2012). However, more recently successive governments have aimed to facilitate further integration of FE into the HE sector (Kumari, 2017). A number of larger colleges have uncoupled themselves from validating partner universities and have been awarded foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP) and taught degree awarding powers (TDAP), with Newcastle College Group being the first college to be granted TDAP in 2016 (ibid.).

The WP social mobility ethos propounded by Dearing, Blunkett and others focused Foundation Degrees towards under represented, so called 'non-traditional' students and those from "low-participation neighbourhoods" (Schofield and Dismore, 2010 p.208). HE in FE was focused towards students from lower socio-economic groups in order to widen access, and it still attracts higher numbers of WP students than HE providers outside of the FE sector (Kumari, 2017). Given the supportive and inclusive ethos of FE, FECs offering HE did (and still do) "offer hope and a way into HE for those traditionally excluded from university HE "due, *inter alia*, to social status, poverty, race, ethnicity, age or gender" (Jephcote and Latiner Raby, 2012, p.350). Indeed, Kumari (2017) suggests one of the reasons the Dearing Report considered FE to be an appropriate vehicle for HE expansion was by virtue of its ability to recruit non-traditional students and to equip them with valuable vocational skills.

This overview depicts a small, but distinct and significant sector of HE which has been strongly influenced by its FE heritage. HE in FE has arguably divided opinion and has been characterised by some as being a marginal type of HE (Colley et al., 2014) that is "not quite higher education" (Fenge, 2011, p.380). It is a form of HE that is of "less status than the 'mainstream' undergraduate education; for a few, it is not 'real' higher education" (Parry et al., 2012, p.23). However, Avis and Orr (2016) argue that its inclusivity and accessibility "help to enlighten lives and expose

opportunities for many individual students" (p.60). Framed within notions of transformation and opportunity, they suggest how HE in FE can "open[ing] up fields of knowledge that may explain and enhance experience" (p.61).

1.5 Context for the study – Landbased education and landbased colleges (LBCs)

To further foreground this study, I continue with an outline of LBCs and students. As part of this I briefly describe Shireland College in order to situate it within the wider landbased context. Given that the majority of LBCs are ostensibly FECs (albeit with a particular portfolio of courses), some of which offer HE in FE, this overview will not repeat the broad contextual framing of FE and of HE in FE which has been described in sections 1.3 and 1.4).

Classified by the UK Standard Industrial Classification (UK SIC) in the Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry category (Appendix 2) the term 'landbased' can be taken to account for employment opportunities, which are concerned with land, crop and animal management, production and care (Lantra, n.d.) (Appendix 3). Employment opportunities within the landbased sector, particularly with regard to equine/animal/veterinary nursing jobs, are often "unglamorous and low-paid", with equine/animal/veterinary nursing "dominated by relatively unskilled workers" (Webster and Jones, 2007, A5: 8–9). Jobs are typically practical husbandry and animal caring roles, which include working as operatives in kennels, riding stables, veterinary practices, dog grooming parlours, animal sanctuaries and pet shops. The landbased sector skills council, Lantra, reports that there is low attainment of formal qualifications in the equine/animal/veterinary nursing sector (Lantra, 2014). Emanating from craft and apprenticeship models of knowledge, rather than scientific disciplines of zoology or veterinary science, Salisbury and Jephcote (2010) suggest the theory underpinning equine/animal/veterinary nursing is generic and relies upon

handed-down animal husbandry and practical handling knowledge to provide sufficient underpinning for workers who frequently undertake “menial roles” (p.79) such as mucking out, feeding and grooming.

For veterinary nursing, gaining Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) recognition to be styled as a veterinary nurse (VN) is viewed by the sector as being of greater importance than college qualifications per se. The RCVS recognition is a Level 3 professional qualification, which has “a very strong emphasis on vocational training, encouraging the development of practical skills and Day One Competences” (Kidd, 2015, n.p.). For the equine sector, it’s very traditional notions of horse riding and horse management being more of an art rather than a science can be traced back to its military roots. Emphasising practical skills and horse handling abilities, riding instructor training typically relies upon ‘instructional’ pedagogies focused upon practical skills acquisition and working competence (McGreevy, 2007). The British Horse Society (BHS) dominate professional qualifications. Internationally renowned, there is great kudos for having BHS instructor qualifications. In contrast, there is resistance to the concept of equine degree programmes from some within the UK horse industry, with leading voices questioning their value by asking ‘Are equine degrees worth the paper they are written on?’ (Pimbley, 2012).

The significance of being practically able and competent within the broad equine/animal/veterinary nursing sector was confirmed by Salisbury and Jephcote (2010). In their study of FE animal care students they found teachers privileged and emphasised practical skills acquisition over the more theoretical aspects of the curriculum. This privileging was said to have been compounded by teacher vocational experience and awareness of the realities of the sector, and what was demanded by employers, i.e. fast and efficient workers to undertake mundane and repetitive practical work. Despite some advances, equine/animal/veterinary nursing

still rely heavily upon “ritualistic and routine” (McKenna et al., 2006, p.135) practices steeped in tradition, which are passed down often “without question” (ibid.) to the next generation.

Landbased education is largely served by small, specialist institutions known as landbased colleges (formally agricultural colleges). Given the distinct resource needs to support landbased curricula, e.g. animals, crops, machinery etc., LBCs are almost exclusively situated in rural locations, many with farms/land/specialised animal and plant housing units and equestrian facilities. According to Landex (the national organisation which represents the interests of UK LBCs), they have 36 LBC members (Landex, n.d.). Whilst there are a small number of specialist higher education institutions (HEIs) that focus on undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) landbased education, i.e. Harper Adams University, The Royal Agricultural University, LBCs typically have a mixed FE and HE portfolio from subjects across the landbased occupational areas (Appendices 2 and 3) (Rapley, 2014).

LBCs are primarily involved in FE (RQF Levels 1–3 provision), with HE (RQF Levels 4–6) often being a minor element of their portfolio. FE programmes tend to be focused on Level 2 and 3 BTEC/Edexcel Diplomas, with most LBCs also providing entry/foundation level qualifications for students with learning differences, and those requiring personal and social skills development. HE provision is usually concerned with foundation degree programmes with extensive inclusion of work experience placements and mandatory evening/weekend duties on college farms/stable yards/animal units etc. Student numbers are usually relatively small, with a foundation degree at a small/medium sized LBC is likely to have 5–15 student per year group.

Staff teaching HE in all but the largest LBCs tend to be involved in FE teaching and are usually required to have professional occupational qualifications to complement

academic ones, e.g. British Horse Society (BHS) instructor, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) veterinary nurse. It is generally only in the larger LBCs with greater HE provision and student numbers that separate HE and FE teaching teams with a greater range of subject expertise, exist (SQW and J.M Consulting, 2007). As in FE and in HE in FE generally, teaching loads are higher than in HEIs, with teachers with a mixed FE and HE load typically teaching 22–26 hours per week.

1.6 The research site – Shireland College

This section briefly situates Shireland College within the wider LBC context and outlines some of its key features. The specialist nature of landbased provision and the limited number of LBCs in the UK, together with the number of participants in the study (n=6), increases the potential issue of deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009). As suggested by Sparkes and Smith (2014),

> even if pseudonyms are used and place names changed and so on, the 'better' a qualitative study is the 'worse' it is at maintaining anonymity of the participant and the setting. This is particularly so when the study focuses on one individual, one club, or particular setting. (p.217)

Despite this concern there is scope to describe the college. However, the level of detail (both here and throughout the thesis) is scant. Given the number of UK LBCs and the movement of teachers between them the minimal use of descriptive detail is unavoidable.

Shireland College is typical of other dual FE and HE LBCs, with FE being the primary focus of the institution. It is set within a rural location, yet is relatively close to an urban area. Within the wider area there is an established farming sector, with equestrian and animal related pursuits and small business enterprises being well represented. The college has in the region of 300 full time students (FE and HE). The college has extensive equine facilities and modern stabling. A broad range of species serves the animal studies courses, with a variety of different animal housing systems

in existence. The veterinary nursing provision includes diagnostic equipment and laboratories.

Like many other similar LBCs, Shireland College serves local students, with very few travelling from outside the county. It offers a limited range of landbased courses from entry to Level 6. The bulk of the provision is focused on FE Level 2 (GCSE/ Level 2 BTEC Diploma) and Level 3 (BTEC Extended Diploma). HE accounts for around 10 per cent of students across the college, with the FdSc being the main HE programme. Like other similar providers, the HE is vocationally orientated with many students studying initially for a FdSc, with the potential to complete a Level 6 BSc 'top up'. As with other small LBCs, Shireland College has its HE programmes validated by a partner university that is responsible for assuring quality and standards.

In common with many small LBCs, the majority of HE teachers studied their UG awards at a LBC, rather than a university. Like many similarly constituted institutions, all of the teachers in the study teach FE and HE, with average weekly contact time being between 18 and 25 hours.

1.7 Personal drivers for undertaking the study

I trained to become an FE/HE equine/animal science teacher in the 1990s. Latterly, I have been involved with UG equine/animal programmes in LBCs both as an external examiner and as a university subject adviser. Most recently, I have been working as a teacher educator for Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (PGCE QTLS) students to enable them to teach FE/HE landbased subjects.

My experience led me to reflect upon the college environment and its potential to influence HE in terms of the way it was constituted and taught. My 'hunch' revolved

around ideas of HE in FE teachers working in an environment with heavy teaching loads, FE-orientated CPD and teacher education, a weak or absent research culture and a campus with 16-year-old students. Did an FE environment influence HE in any way? If so, how might this manifest itself when teachers enacted their pedagogic practice? What did HE teachers actually do in their HE classrooms? (Rapley, 2017).

1.8 Justification for the study

Unlike sectors of education, e.g. primary and secondary, where studies concerning teacher pedagogy and practices abound, HE in FE is an under-researched and neglected sector. Therefore this study is timely and important. Despite 10 per cent of UK students studying HE in an FE college, and an increasing number of colleges gaining foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP) and taught degree awarding powers (TDAP), no in-depth, micro-level studies have explored what HE in FE teachers actually *do* in their HE classrooms. Allusions are made about the 'distinct' nature of HE in FE pedagogy (Burkhill et al., 2008) and about the perceived challenges of teaching HE in an FEC (Young, 2002; Harwood and Harwood, 2004), yet no empirical studies using multiple classroom observations and multiple in-depth interviews have been conducted to explore and theorise pedagogic practices. Kadi-Hanifi and Keenan (2016) suggest "HE in FE teachers are subjects little researched" (p.74), whilst Greenwood (2011) suggests "much of the literature is focused on learning cultures and professional identities, student learning and motivation, rather than pedagogy. As a result it has been difficult to identify research relating to HE in FE pedagogy and evidence" (p.1). To respond to this gap in the research, this study will add to the HE in FE literature corpus by presenting new theoretical constructions regarding HE in FE pedagogy.

1.9 Research question

Having reflected upon my own experiences of HE in FE and my 'hunch' regarding if and how an FE context might influence HE teacher pedagogic practice, my research question was simply:

When teaching HE at Shireland College, what do these HE in FE teachers do,

how do they do it, and why?

1.10 Thesis organisation

The thesis comprises of nine chapters. Given that this is a grounded theory (GT) study, it is essential here to make clear the way in which this thesis is structured in comparison to more traditional social science PhD theses. Taking the advice of Dunne (2009) to articulate GT thesis structure from the outset, I present and justify my own position in order to "minimise the potential for misunderstanding between the author and the reader" (p.121).

Grounded theory (GT) is discussed in full in Chapter 5. However, to contextualise my position regarding the way in which this thesis is organised and ways in which I have used existing literature, it is necessary to provide some brief background here to make greater sense of, and to give greater meaning to subsequent chapters.

GT is based upon the notion of developing new theoretical understandings and constructs from empirical data, rather than as a result of hypothesis testing using existing theories. Empirical data from the field of study is given a privileged position over theories and concepts that already exist (ibid). Instead of using deductive approaches, GT relies upon induction to follow emergent leads from research participants and theoretical or thematic leads grounded in the empirical data. The emergent nature confers a level of unpredictability upon GT. Indeed, this is arguably

its strength and is why it is often used to study areas that are often largely unknown or underexplored in a theoretical sense. Rather than entering a research site to look for something specific in order to prove/confirm a point, a GT study is predicated on upon entering a research site without having a hypothesis to test. Instead a GT study allows themes to arise from the site. As such, themes are emergent and data is empirically grounded, rather than being preordained or imposed with exant theory (Giles et al., 2013).

A specific area of difference between traditional theses and GT theses relates to that of the literature review. Specifically, this is in terms of *when* and *how* literature is used. This is important to clarify because it directly impinges upon the way in which this thesis is organised. Given its importance this section serves to make it clear *how* and *when* I reviewed and used existing literature within this study. Unlike a traditional thesis that follows an arguably linear 'literature review, theoretical framework, findings and discussion' format, with taken-for-granted expectations about what each section is for and how it is approached and written, a GT thesis is not approached or written in a linear fashion. As Dunne (2009) cautions, "in a very practical manner the relationship with extant literature and the manner, including the timing, in which it is accessed, has very significant implications for the actual structure of the final written output, in this case a doctoral thesis" (p.120).

With regard to issues of timing of the literature review within a GT, there are two broad positions. These are occupied by those who either advocate delaying the literature review until *after* data has been gathered and/or *after* data has been analysed, and those who support the use of a *pre*-data collection literature review to provide context and researcher sensitivity. With regard to *how* literature is used within theoretical construction, broad positions include those who advocate using existing literature and theories *during* data collection, category building and

theorising, and those who recommend introducing extant literature *after* data collection, category building and theorising has been undertaken.

Traditional, so-called classic GT maintains that researchers should set aside any *a priori* assumptions, ignore any literature prior to entering a research site and only introduce literature “when the grounded theory is nearly completed during the sorting and writing up” (Glaser, 1998, p.67). This is advocated to avoid ‘contaminating’ findings with existing theories, thereby stunting the opportunity for new and original theoretical insights to be generated.

In contrast, the constructivist version of GT espoused by Charmaz (used within this thesis) is clear that ignoring researcher background and ignoring the literature is not advised. Charmaz suggests how an initial literature review can give necessary context and background, and can provide "points of departure from which to study the data" (Charmaz, 2003, p.259). Cognisant of the potential for existing literature to import preconceived ideas, she then advocates allowing this existing literature to "lie fallow" (Charmaz, 2006, p.166) in order that the researchers’ own ideas might be articulated during the analysis and theorising stages. She only advocates exploring relevant existing literature *after* this in order to establish links between the researchers’ own analysis and pertinent existing literature. Charmaz supports the use of existing literature in the final stages of a CGT in order to “strengthen[s] your argument – and your credibility” (p.166).

Being a constructivist grounded theorist, I followed Charmaz and undertook an initial literature review *prior* to gathering data, in order to increase my theoretical sensitivity and to provide me a sense of the broad ‘geography’ of HE in FE and pedagogy and the theoretical conversations that were going on within it (McMenamin, 2006). This subsequently served to assist me in determining my research questions and the subsequent methodological choices I made. As a result of its sensitising function, the

initial literature review (see Chapter 2) is quite tightly focused when compared to initial literature chapters in 'traditional' theses.

Continuing to follow Charmaz and entirely in keeping with GT tenets, I analysed my empirical data (see Chapter 7) using my own theoretical sensitivity (afforded by my personal experience of the field and by the contextualising and sensitising literature featured in Chapter 2), rather than through a specific theoretical lens. I only returned to the literature towards the end of the thesis (see Chapter 8) to use existing theory as points of reference to discuss my findings and to construct an integrated GT. As part of this I also drew on the contextualising and sensitising literature featured in Chapter 2. In so doing I was able to illustrate where my findings concurred or contradicted that which I described in Chapter 2. Using existing theory helped to facilitate the development of the final GT by integrating my own theorising with relevant theory. Situating existing literature towards the end of a GT study is also supported by Glaser (1998), one of the originators of GT. He suggests that the literature that may ultimately be of most relevance to generating a final GT may not actually be known at the start of the study, hence why bringing in literature only at this stage is advocated.

Given the particularities of writing up a GT thesis and the contestation concerning the use of existing literature with GT, I articulate my position here at the start of the thesis to avoid my decisions concerning *when* and *how* I have used existing literature, and *where* this has been located within the thesis, causing confusion for the reader. As Dunne (2009) suggests grounded theory is novel in that it is an approach that lends itself to exploratory studies where established/exisiting theory is found to be inappropriate or absent. As I have and intend to publish from this research in order to add to the body of knowledge about HE in FE, it is essential that the nature of GT, and the reasons for choosing it, are made evident to any reader.

Keen to be clear and unambiguous in this regard, I present this essential clarification early on in the thesis to enable those who read it to be able to recognise the particular position from which it has been written, and to provide a rationale as to why theorists/theoretical lens are not brought in at an early stage within this study.

Having articulated my position regarding GT thesis structure, literature and the literature review, I conclude this chapter by outlining the chapter plan within the thesis.

Within this first introductory chapter I have provided an overview of the thesis along with its aims and purpose, key definitions and background concerning HE, FE, HE in FE and landbased education and student characteristics, justification and motivation for undertaking the study, and presented my central research question. Crucially, I have made clear how existing literature has been used within the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents a preliminary review of HE in FE literature, which specifically focuses on pedagogy and teaching and learning within HE in FE. It also discusses broader historical and political drivers and influences in HE in FE and the wider FE and HE contexts. Being a CGT, the review served to increase my theoretical sensitivity and to provide "points of departure from which to study the data" (Charmaz, 2003, p.259).

Chapter 3 discusses my philosophical turn to interpretivism and to practice. Situated within a discussion of my pilot study, I describe my journey towards embracing interpretivism and of adopting a PT sensitised CGT. As part of this I discuss reflexivity and my own ontological and epistemological position.

Having become acquainted with both PT and GT during my pilot study, Chapters 4 and 5 provide an overview and critique of both of them. These overviews justify their respective inclusion in the methodological design of the study, and articulate how

they philosophically and methodologically complement each other. Chapter 5 also provides some further articulation of my ontological and epistemological position.

Chapter 6 details the methodological approach adopted, including methods used for collecting and analysing data.

Chapter 7 presents my interpretative analysis of data gathered from Shireland College. In the spirit of CGT this interpretative account is the result of an increasingly abstract interpretation of data, memos and my own theoretical sensitivity and experience of HE in FE and landbased education. The chapter includes substantial excerpts of participant narratives and presents the four categories, which have resulted from the interpretative analysis: “Just like school”; “Big Brother”; “Busking it” and “Lacking autonomy”. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the three theoretical themes that cohere around and connect to each of the categories: Surveillance and control; Teacher identity and agency and Pedagogic risk aversion.

Following the interpretive analysis of the data, Chapter 8 provides a detailed discussion of each theme and fully integrates it with literature from within and beyond the education literature corpus (including how it accords or not with the contextualising and sensitising literature discussed in Chapter 2). The chapter concludes by presenting a fully integrated substantive CGT – “Taking the path of least resistance” – to theoretically best account for HE teacher pedagogic practice at the college.

The final chapter (Chapter 9) draws the study to its conclusion. Within this chapter I discuss how this study has made an original contribution to the body of knowledge for both HE in FE and for landbased education. The chapter also includes limitations of the study, implications for the HE in FE and landbased education sectors, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Policy, Pedagogy and HE in FE Literature Review

2.0 Introduction, purpose and nature of reviewing the literature for a grounded theory study

Chapter 1 introduced the study, identified the research questions and highlighted the rationale for exploring HE in FE teacher pedagogic practices within an FE landbased college. As part of this, key definitions and broader educational sector contexts have been described. Further, aspects concerning the particular characteristics and nature of landbased education and LBCs have been articulated.

This chapter presents serves a number of functions; to explore the policy landscape within which HE in FE situated, to explore notions of pedagogy and pedagogic practice, and to provide an overview of literature that specifically explores pedagogy and teacher practice within an HE in FE setting. The review of HE in FE literature is designed to provide a vantage point from which to pose my research question. Further, it serves to establish context and to situate the study within that context; to ascertain if the area has published research; to ascertain if similarly constituted and orientated studies are planned; and to ensure the researcher is sufficiently informed to give the study enough focus (Hallberg, 2010). It further serves to identify gaps and limitations in the current body of knowledge concerning HE in FE pedagogy and teaching practices, as well as to provide a critique of these works. Finally, it acts to "provide a rationale for the potential contribution of the study" (Chiovitti and Piran, 2003, p.342) to the body of knowledge.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this is a GT study (for further detail regarding GT see Chapter 5). Its inductive nature relies upon not beginning with a defined hypothesis to 'test', nor from a position of preconceived assumptions. Instead it is the data, rather than existing literature or theories, which assumes primacy during its subsequent rendering and substantive theory construction (Holloway and Wheeler,

2010). As discussed in Chapter 1 *where* and *how* to review literature in GT study has been the subject of significant debate. The originators of GT, Glaser and Strauss (1967) were explicit about the need for researchers to be *tabula rasa.* They advocated researchers should delay or "literally ignore the literature and fact on the area under study" (p.37) to avoid any possibility of the newly emerged theory being 'contaminated' with prior literature (ibid.,1967). Given that this is a constructivist grounded theory (CGT), the concept of being *tabula rasa* is rejected in accordance with Charmaz's constructivist GT tenets with regard to the literature review (as described in Chapter 1, section 1.10, see Chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of GT). Following Charmaz (2014), I concur "a lack of familiarity with relevant literatures is unlikely and untenable" (p.306). Indeed, given my experience of the sector as an HE in FE teacher, external examiner and teacher educator, I will inevitably have been exposed to a range of literature as a consequence of my professional background. Writing about his co-author, Bryant (2017) supports Charmaz's constructivist approach whereby a general, preliminary review to scan the geography of the broad area prior to data collection is advocated. This is followed up post-data collection with a further review and discussion of relevant theories and literature, which accords with the empirical data and findings. This is further supported by Birks and Mills (2015) who assert how a "limited and purposive preliminary review can assist a researcher in the early stages, not the least which in the early enhancement of theoretical sensitivity" (p.23). Indeed, Charmaz advocates employing 'sensitising concepts' from the literature to provide researchers with "points of departure from which to study the data" (Charmaz, 2003, p.259). She encourages reviewed literature and existing theories to then be left to "lie fallow" (Charmaz, 2006 p.166) during the data collection phases, thereby allowing the empirical data to take primacy.

In recognition of these tenets and their affiliations to a CGT approach, this review scopes the landscape as a means of justifying the study, by enhancing my own

theoretical sensitivity and by providing 'points of departure' when gathering data. In the discussion and conclusion chapters within this thesis, this literature review will be revisited as part of illustrating where my research serves to corroborate existing literature. Commensurate with a GT approach, pertinent existing literature from a range of theoretical bodies is integrated with my own findings within the discussion chapter (see Chapter 8), an approach to theorising, which is entirely consistent with GT. The integration of my own interpretivist theorising (see Chapter 7) with existing literature is used to construct grounded theorisation, e.g. a substantive CGT (see Chapter 8). As part of this process and discussion (see Chapter 8), I indicate where my research departs from existing literature, and where it extends and augments the corpus of HE in FE knowledge, thereby providing an original contribution to knowledge. With these particular GT tenets in mind, it is noted again here that the literature review of HE in FE teaching and learning/pedagogy (see section 2.1.8) is deliberately broad so as to remain fully commensurate with GT. It is written with due respect and acknowledgement paid to the literature, but it is written from a particular point of view (i.e. that which is enshrined in GT principles) to provide sensitivity to the field in a limited and purposive manner and a broad direction of travel of the ensuing GT study (Birks and Mills, 2011).

2.1 HE in FE literature review parameters

In order to undertake a sensitising review, search parameters and terms were established to ensure literature related to my study and to my research question (Wellington et al., 2005). Given the research aim to explore HE in FE pedagogic practices of HE in FE teachers, I was seeking literature broadly aligned with HE in FE pedagogy. However, HE in FE pedagogy cannot be explored in isolation from other broader and related HE in FE literature. Therefore this literature review contains a wider review of HE in FE literature that is to a greater or lesser extent, concerned

with pedagogy, and teaching and learning and scholarship. Whilst I used broad, more generalised search terms in order to find and review this type of literature, I did use more specific terms to search for HE in FE pedagogy literature. I framed my HE in FE pedagogy search terms under broad headings and only included literature reflecting UK contexts. These terms were framed within a date period from 2002 to 2017. This reflected the date of publication of the first paper concerning pedagogy within an HE in FE setting (see Young, 2002).

As described in the first chapter, the universality of the term 'HE in FE' has begun to be replaced by and/or used interchangeably with CBHE, CHE, College based higher education and College based HE. To account for the parallel use of terminology, I searched for literature using both established and more newly coined terms. I also included *equine*, *animal* and *veterinary nursing* as search terms to give myself the opportunity to find any HE in FE pedagogy literature under these headings. Unlike equine and veterinary nursing where course names are generally very well understood and subject to little variation, animal was split into three because each of these terms are widely used in HE in FE, and are often used to represent a range of courses with similar content. For each heading I searched using: *teaching, pedagogy, teaching styles, teaching approaches* and *teaching practices* (Appendix 4).

2.1.1 Review methods employed – HE in FE literature

This review was not merely the presentation of a descriptive list of papers and other literature. In order to synthesise key ideas and works into a summary of what is known about HE in FE pedagogy I subjected each item to a number of questions and examinations:

1. How does it contribute to my own area of study?

2. Is it peer reviewed?
3. Does it include empirical data?
4. What is the size and scale of the study? (number of participants and research sites)
5. When was the study conducted? It is out of date or does it still maintain currency?
6. What is the methodology and methods used for collecting data?
7. How were findings reported?
8. How coherent and persuasive were discussions and conclusions?
9. What are its strengths and limitations?

2.1.2 Policy prefacing and the HE in FE literature review

Having laid out the premise and parameters used to find literature, it is vital to foreground the literature within the broader policy context within which HE in FE is situated. HE in FE is unique in that, whilst it is situated in FE, it effectively straddles both FE and HE. Therefore it is inevitably going to be subject to, and influenced by policies and practices from both of these sectors. To understand HE in FE (including notions of pedagogy and teaching and learning) is it necessary to have a clear sense of what HE in FE is, and how policies and practices from FE and from HE (amongst others) have led to its creation, development and current manifestation. Arguably any exploration of pedagogy and of teaching (in any sector) cannot occur in a vacuum nor without considering the broad economic, policy and social landscape within which it operates.

As described within the sector overviews of FE, HE and HE in FE in Chapter 1 (see sections 1.3 and 1.4), these sectors are all part of a wider landscape. As Dundar et al. (2017) contend, “education systems are a reflection of society… the prevailing ideologies of government policies, and philosophies [which] tend to largely influence

policies, practices, and curriculum" (p.9). Therefore, prior to discussing specific HE in FE literature, a review of both FE and HE policy landscapes, and their evolution, is provided in order to establish context. As part of this, the broad academic discourses of FE and of HE, and their connection with the policy landscape, are described. Further, in order to foreground and give greater context to the HE in FE pedagogy literature, pedagogy and pedagogic practice are defined. These are then discussed in relation to how it broadly relates to, and is characterised within, FE and HE sectors.

2.1.3 Neoliberalism in education

In Chapter 1 (see section 1.3) I described how education has become marketised and subject to competition. This can broadly be attributed to the influence of neoliberalism. Indeed, Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005) suggest that "we live in the age of neoliberalism" (p.1), with the 'we' coming to mean advanced capitalist democracies, of which the UK is one. Whilst the term remains contested there is broad agreement within the literature that neoliberalism is concerned with "advancing the human condition through privatisation, entrepreneurialism and competition" (Carpenter et al., 2012, p.146). By reducing the role and size of the state via lower taxation and fewer public services, individuals and the private sector assume greater responsibilities for themselves (ibid.).

The global education sector has not escaped the influence of neoliberalism and its market-driven ideals. Given the imperative for competition as a means of driving up choice, productivity and profit, O'Leary and Wood (2017) remark how the interest in improving education has "risen sharply in recent years" (p.575). They attribute this to "the ever-growing importance of comparative performance data from international assessment systems such as the OECD's [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] flagship Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)" (ibid.). They further suggest how connections between economic performance and

educational performance have increasingly been viewed as informing the other (ibid.). Given how 2016 OECD data reports UK productivity at 15.8 per cent below the OECD average (Davies, 2017), it is not unreasonable to believe that the interest in using education and skills as a means to improve productivity will continue.

Within this neoliberal landscape, the era of post modernity and Post-Fordism has led to volatility and changes in global labour markets (Usher, 2009). Education discourses have increasingly shifted from notions of education for the public good and enlightenment to those towards marketisation as a means of responding to notions of competition within a neoliberal policy landscape. This shift "personalises economic competitiveness by stressing the need… for being skilled" (ibid., p.174). In so doing, it can change education from being viewed a public good to being a private good, whereby the main beneficiaries of it are not to the state and the public. Rather, education as a private good confers benefits (primarily economic and social) upon individuals (Naidoo and Williams, 2015). Fisher and Thompson (2010) claim how neoliberalism has "attained the status of orthodoxy in the UK" (p.5). Locke (2015) believes that neoliberalism and "the rules of the marketized, postmodern world" (p.257) have distorted education by de-emphasising its role in emancipation and enlightenment. Instead, the discourse of skills has subsumed previous notions concerning the purpose of education. This view is echoed by Bathmaker who suggests the narrative of globally competitive "high skills, knowledge-driven economy" (Bathmaker, 2016, p.27) is dominating educational discourses. Indeed, UK government policy discourses frame this "market orientated ideology" (Pleasance, 2016, p.73) within policies, which emphasise the development of skills for economic productivity and prosperity. In 2003, the government published the report *21st Century Skills Realising Our Potential, Individuals, Employers, Nation*, where it emphasised the need to "improve our productivity, and our ability to support sustainable development, if we are to compete successfully in today's global market"

(DfES, DTI and DWP, 2003, p.17). The report cited skills development as being the vehicle for improvement, but cautioned that this must be “together with enterprise, competition and innovation” (ibid.).

Within the UK context this neoliberal discourse of efficiency and competition is well established within and across educational institutions of all types in the UK, including FE and HE. Here, regimes of performativity and accountability are associated with the adoption of ideologies to drive up public sector efficiency and responsiveness that emerged in the early 1990s. Described by Randle and Brady (1997) as “New Managerialism” (p.125), this NPM (new public management) approach was modeled upon the lean and seemingly efficient private sector. Privileged upon notions of “choice, competition, effectiveness, efficiency, performance management, accountability and risk” (Sugrue and Mertkan, 2017, p.176), and distinctly neoliberal in its outlook, it was strongly advocated by Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government. As part of this it sought to align economic productivity with education and training by ensuring the supply of employer and industrially relevant qualifications. Further, it promoted notions regarding individual accountability and performance.

In addition to notions of competition, managerialist ideals contributed to the establishment of a culture of consumerism and a consumer and producer feedback culture (Avis, 1996; Bailey, 2014). The language of performance indicators and continuous improvement re-cast students as consumers and “potential income generation units and as customers to be satisfied” (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005, p.274). Keen to attract consumers and their attendant funding, the era of publically available performance and inspection data subsequently enables students and parents to make informed decisions regarding educational institutions and their services (Lucas and Crowther, 2016), effectively contributing to the commodification of education. According to Pleasance (2016), this neoliberal landscape has

significantly and indelibly changed the UK education sector. How this neoliberal landscape has influenced the UK FE sector is discussed next, where a broader review of the policy landscape and academic discourse of FE is offered.

2.1.4 Policy landscape and discourses in FE

According to Norris and Adam (2017), FE has been exposed to a period of seemingly "continuous change over the last three decades" (p.5). They characterise this change since the 1980s as a near constant 'churn' whereby the sector has experienced significant policy shifts and changes in mission direction, qualifications and focus. Specifically, since the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), FE has been subject to a number of government reviews, papers and policies including (amongst others and not exclusively):

- The Learning and Skills Act (2000)
- The Education Act (2002)
- Success for All: Reforming Further Education and Training – Our Vision for the Future (2002)
- Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector (2004)
- The 14–19 Education and Skills (2005) white paper
- The Foster Report (2005) (Realising the Potential – A Review of the Future Role of Further Education Colleges)
- Further Education Raising Skills Improving Life Chances (2006) white paper
- The Leitch Review (2006) (Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills)
- The Further Education and Training Act (2007)
- The Further Education Teachers Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations 2007

- The Education and Skills Act (2008)
- Strategy for the Future of Apprenticeships (2008) white paper
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009)
- Skills for Sustainable Growth (2010)
- Further Education and Skills System Reform Plan: building a world class skills system (2011)
- The Wolf Report (2011) (Review of Vocational Education)
- The Lingfield Review (2012) (Professionalism in Further Education)
- Employer Ownership of Skills; Building the Momentum (2013) white paper
- The Sainsbury Review and Post-16 Skills Plan (2016)
- Technical and Further Education Act 2017

This 'churn' and sheer number of reports and policies is indicative of the relative policy turbulence of FE since the Further and Higher Education Act (1992), much of which can arguably be traced back to the broader neoliberal political landscape within UK education, and in response to on-going labour market skills shortages and low productivity as described earlier. The policy direction and discourse in FE has increasingly focused upon the development of skills for economic productivity and success. It has also emphasised the role of FE in improving social mobility and transforming life chances through a skills-driven training and vocational education route. The changing shape and orientation of FE reflects its response to market, societal and policy changes and demands (Bailey and Unwin, 2014). Whilst a forensic examination of each of these reports and policies is beyond the remit of this thesis, it is vital to devote some attention to those, which have played a significant role in the evolution of FE from 1992 until the present time. In so doing, it will help to illuminate how FE has been affected by these policies and events. In turn, this will help to give greater context for HE in FE and an understanding of the FE policy drivers that have hitherto, and currently influence it.

Arguably the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) played a significant role in paving the way for the performativity and audit culture that is widely reported within contemporary FE literature. Known as Incorporation, the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 on April 1, 1993 removed colleges from Local Education Authority (LEA) control, thereby establishing a very different funding and control landscape. Pleasance (2016) suggests that this kind of "decentralisation and deregulation… [are] cornerstones of neoliberalism" (p.73), and can be seen to characterise Incorporation. This notion of Incorporation as reflecting neoliberal ideology is further supported by Smith (2017), whereby he contends Incorporation "prepared the ground for the neoliberalisation of the sector… by deracinating colleges… a neoliberal perspective that positioned FE primarily as an abstract space of 'skills' production" (pp.857–8). Described by Bailey and Unwin (2014) as "a watershed that wrenched colleges from an era of democratic localism" (p.459), incorporation created a 'quasi-market' whereby colleges assumed control of all functional areas including HR, curriculum offers, finance and advertising. Wallace (2007) argues how the shift of focus towards being 'business like' resulted in college managers attending more to financial and cost-saving matters than to issues concerning pedagogy and the curriculum. This is supported by Nash et al. (2008). They suggest the accountability regime in FE encouraged instrumentalism by focusing on achievement in order to meet bureaucratic and financial demands. Further, the language associated with teaching, learning and assessment began to include more 'business like' terminology. The language of accountability and audit, e.g. 'evidencing, tracking and delivering', began to appear with increased frequency (ibid.). This shift is characterised by Gleeson et al. (2015) as FE having to provide "market-tested teaching and learning environments" (p.81), a shift they argue "cannot be de-contextualised from the wider proliferation of managerialism in FE as a whole" (p.82).

Taking responsibility for employing their own teachers (rather than being employed by the Local Education Authority (LEA), incorporation impacted upon conditions of service and increased contact time within a new regime of accountability and management scrutiny (Robson and Bailey, 2009). Within the neoliberal regime of accountability, Simmons (2016) suggests incorporation led to a purging of established FE teachers and managers from the sector through extensive restructures. He further argues how incorporation precipitated "substantially reduced levels of autonomy" (p.695) for FE teachers and "far higher levels of monitoring and surveillance than ever before" (ibid.). Nash et al. (2008) remark that closer monitoring within a more 'business like', entrepreneurial FE sector created an audit culture of 'distortion', whereby teachers increasingly devoted their efforts to ensuring their paper trails of evidence were in place, in order to provide self-protection.

Driven by the imperative of 'continuous improvement', colleges became businesses operating in a marketised landscape (Lucas and Crowther, 2016) and were compelled to compete for students in order to attract funding and to remain financially viable. The marketised landscape also pitched colleges in direct competition with other educational institutions and training providers (Bailey and Unwin, 2014). This included schools that were granted permission to include some vocational provision in their Sixth Forms (Wallace, 2013). Since incorporation the discourse of FEC education (and education more broadly) has continued to be replete with language and terminology reflecting the heritage of neoliberal new managerialism. Emphasising performance and orientated firmly in the direction of neoliberal economics (Grummell and Murray, 2015), measurement, effectiveness, league tables, delivery, efficiency, customer feedback, student experience (to name but a few) are part of a system of control and regulation. As part of this colleges are compelled to be accountable to their stakeholders, i.e. students, employers and the government (BIS, 2014).

The relationship between wider political ideologies and policy drivers, e.g. neoliberalism and Incorporation, and what goes on in FECs serves to articulate connections between "the microworld of classroom interactions and macro-level objectives of standards and achievements" (Jones, 2003, p.160). Smith (2017) contends these wider political ideologies have impacted negatively upon they ways in which FE teachers enact their teaching work, by suggesting "the work of teachers is colonised by the hegemonic performance imperatives of the FE quasi-market and, beyond those, the economic and 'skills' needs of UK plc" (p.856). Further, he argues that neoliberalism also impacts upon students by "instrumentalising them for economic ends" (p.868). The hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism arguably undermines and weakens the democratic goals of education and the influences classroom practices of teachers and the nature of the education experienced by students. This view is strongly endorsed by Giroux (2013) who maintains:

> The market driven regime is a form of instrumental rationality that quantifies all forms of meaning…substitutes training for education…The production of knowledge…is instrumental, wedded to objective outcomes, privatized, and is largely geared to produce consuming subjects...Teachers are deskilled, largely reduced to teaching for the test, business culture organizes the governance structures of schooling, knowledge is viewed as a commodity, and students are treated reductively as both consumers and workers…Teachers are no longer asked to be creative or to think critically... on the contrary, they have been reduced to the keeper of methods, implementers of an audit culture, and removed from assuming autonomy in their classrooms. (Giroux, 2013, n.p.)

This condemnatory narrative regarding neoliberalism and its effect on education does resonate with contemporary literature concerning the FE sector. Connections between neoliberal discourses and FE teacher practices in the literature particularly relate to a recurring theme regarding the existence of a 'surveillance culture' in FE. Gleeson et al. (2015) argue that a culture of surveillance and micromanagement stems from a proliferation of "successive neo-liberal intervention in teaching and learning over the last two decades" (p.83). Set against a backdrop of managerialism,

accountability and performativity, O'Leary (2013) suggests increased teacher surveillance is a result of FECs being impelled to deliver "'continuous improvement' in teaching and learning" (p.710). This view is echoed by Simmons (2016) who suggests the "far higher levels of monitoring and surveillance… not only via the state-sponsored inspectorate, Ofsted, but also through 'in-house' college lesson observation and 'quality regimes'" (p.695), can be traced back to incorporation. The current state-sponsored inspectorate, Ofsted have been solely responsible for inspecting FECs since 2007. Prior to this, Ofsted and the now defunct Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) worked together to inspect colleges (2001–2007). Immediately following incorporation (1993–2001) the inspection function was carried out by the now defunct Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Inspectorate (Fletcher, 2015).

Observations can be those undertaken by Ofsted or by college management. O'Leary and Wood (2017) claim observations are used to "quantify and evaluate the quality of teachers' work" (p.573), suggesting how the neoliberal FE landscape drives the demand for metrics and measures. They argue that observations are "an inevitable consequence of the marketisation of education." (p.577). They further suggest this quantitative measure fails to conceive of teaching and pedagogy as anything more than a "simple, linear system where all causes and effects are understood" (ibid.). In terms of contributing to a surveillance culture, the often punitive, rather than developmental perception and nature of an observation can create fear and anxiety amongst teachers who worry about the potential consequences of a poor observation (ibid.). Edgington (2017) argues such observations are reductionist and can deprofessionalise teachers. Edgington reports the notion of deprofessionalisation of FE teachers in 2017. Yet Ainley and Bailey (1997) drew attention to it twenty years previously when describing FE teachers feeling 'invaded' by the untrusting and over-scrutinising conduct of managers,

thereby demonstrating how chronic the situation is.

With regard to observations conducted by Ofsted, Fletcher (2015) reports similar concerns from teachers experiencing feelings of concern and anxiety. Fletcher continues by suggesting how such observations can also result in "'gaming' behaviour…[and] a tactical response" (p.4) by teachers as a means of complying with "the perceived preferences of inspectors rather than their own judgements of the needs of learners" (ibid.). This idea of 'performance' to reassure observers that Ofsted's notion of 'good teaching' is being met, has also been reported by Edgington (2017). Edgington contends the surveillance culture and observations can lead to a situation where "some teachers may feel obliged – or perhaps feel they have little choice – to perform a version of strategic compliance" (Edgington, 2017, p.84). Viewed as being the "'all-seeing' eye for 'standards and 'quality'" (Gleeson et al., 2015, p.83), the use of observations and influence of Ofsted are further signifiers of the impact of neoliberalism and how it manifests itself with FE. The advent of incorporation and the accompanying ideology of neoliberalism (manifested as NPM) arguably created fundamental changes in FE and "radically re-shaped it" (Wallace, 2013, p.25). In contrast to its historically more liberal ideals whereby some broader educational elements had been included alongside vocational provision (Simmons, 2016), incorporation created an "earthquake" in the sector (Wallace, 2013, p.25). Since incorporation a raft of policies have contributed to the on-going policy flux that affects FE, many of which can be viewed in terms of regulation and control framed within broader notions of continuous improvement and raising standards in line with the neoliberalist landscape of education.

The following section provides an overview of some of more the significant policy and discourse landmarks that have punctuated the FE policy landscape since incorporation. It does not include a full chronology of every paper or policy, therefore there are inevitably some gaps. However, it is envisaged that it will serve to give

some useful insight into how FE has responded and changed as a result of the wider political and economic landscape within which it is situated.

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) saw the creation of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). ALI was given responsibility for inspecting post-19 provision. In addition to its schools remit, Ofsted was tasked with inspecting the under-19s provision, with league tables being made available. This was followed by the 2002 Education Act, where anyone teaching in FE was required to have completed a period of probation to ensure they were equipped to deal with the fundamentals of teaching effectively (Duckworth and Tummons, 2010). Prior to this vocational expertise was judged as being of most value to an FE teacher teaching vocational subjects. Following poor feedback from Ofsted (2003) in their *The Initial Training of Further Education Teachers* report, policy reform was presented in the DfES (2004) *Equipping our Teachers for the Future: Reforming Initial Teacher Training for the Learning and Skills Sector* paper. This set out the plan to reform teacher training and to move towards having qualified teachers, with 2007 being the timeframe by which to implement changes.

Changes to the age profile of FE learners were introduced following *The 14–19 Education and Skills* (2005) white paper. For the first time, FECs were able to take 14–16-year-old learners into colleges to undertake some of their studies. This also set functional English and mathematics targets to ensure all students had proficiency before leaving full-time education (Wallace, 2007).

The Foster Report (2005) reaffirmed the government's commitment to skills, with its declaration that "A focus on vocational skills building is not a residual choice but a vital building block in the UK's platform for future prosperity. It gives FE colleges an unequivocal mission and the basis of a renewed and powerful brand image" (Foster, 2005, p.16). In response to the Foster Report, *The Further Education Raising Skills*

Improving Life Chances (2006) white paper reiterated Foster's view that the purpose of FE was to provide training for skills. As part of this, the paper proposed that providers outside of FECs would be part of the formula for providing skills training. Further, it outlined the move towards compulsory FE teacher CPD.

The Leitch Review (2006) (*Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*) continued to endorse the skills agenda stating "Skills were once *a* key driver for prosperity and fairness. Skills are now increasingly *the* key driver" (Leitch, 2006, p.3). It further promulgated previous policy messages concerning the need for the UK to increase productivity, and for both employers and individuals to do more to invest in skills development. Further, it emphasised the need to improve functional literacy and numeracy with a focus on achieving literacy and numeracy targets through Level 2 qualifications (Armitage et al., 2012).

The Further Education and Training Bill (2006) emphasised the important role FECs played in delivering HE, by granting colleges the right to be able to apply for permission to gain foundation degree awarding powers (FDAP). Reinforcing the diversity of FE in terms of its remit and learners, the Education and Skills Act (2008) increased the school leaving age to 18 (Armitage et al., 2012). Responding to the on-going skills shortages and concerns regarding English and mathematics competency of some school leavers, this had big implications for FE, with those who would not have ordinarily continued their education after school, tending to go into FE. Predominantly those with negative school experiences and poorer GCSE results, FE was seen as the ideal setting in which to re-engage learners and equip them with basic skills for life and employment.

This was followed by the publication of the *Skills for Sustainable Growth (2010)* government strategy document, which cited FE as being central to providing skills training in order to provide a "skilled workforce is necessary to stimulate the private-

sector growth" (BIS, 2010, p.3). Skills were also taken to include those concerning literacy and numeracy. Whilst skills were also cited as being central to improving social mobility, the report re-emphasised the role of the individual in taking responsibility for their own skills needs, arguably evidence of the continuance of a neoliberal policy backdrop whereby responsibility rests with individuals, rather than the state.

The publication of the *Review of Vocational Education* in 2011 by Professor Alison Wolf was to precipitate some radical changes to FE, away from large volumes of specific vocational courses to a more rationalised raft of more general vocational courses. The Wolf Report (as known) argued how vocational education in England was "extraordinarily complex and opaque" (Wolf, 2011, p.9), and in need of urgent simplification and rationalisation. The report was critical of the number of vocational courses on offer (predominantly in FECs), citing many (25–35 per cent) as being "low-level vocational qualifications, most of which have little to no labour market value" (Wolf, 2011, p.7). Further, the report stated vocational education had been "micro-managed from the centre for decades" (ibid.). The report highlighted the UK economic landscape of uncertainty and flux, arguing for more general skills to be provided in order to be more responsive to labour market changes. The review led to changes in funding whereby funds would be allocated on a per-learner basis, rather than on a per-qualification basis. Learners without C gradesor better in GCSE English and Mathematics would have to study these in conjunction with their main course of study. It also paved the way for FE teachers with Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status to be able to teach in schools (Armitage et al., 2012). In response to the report FECs were to required to re-visit and revise their vocational course offers.

As described previously, *The Further Education Raising Skills Improving Life Chances* (2006) white paper introduced mandatory CPD for FE teachers to

professionalise teachers and teaching within the FE sector. Arguably in response to poor Ofsted feedback and in part to regulate the sector more efficiently, Duckworth and Tummons (2010) further contend it served as a means of eradicating poor performance from within the FE sector. Following *The Further Education Teachers Continuing Professional Development and Registration (England) Regulations* (2007), FE teachers were required to register with (and controversially pay to register) the (now defunct) Institute for Learning (IfL) and to undertake a minimum of 30 hours' mandatory CPD per year as part of having a 'licence to practice'. However, further policy turbulence effectively undid the professionalising of FE teacher training and qualifications when the 2007 regulations were revoked in 2012. Following the publication of The Lingfield Review (*Professionalism in Further Education*) (Lingfield, 2012), the legislation regarding registration of teachers via the IfL was removed. It was viewed by some as deprofessionalising teachers and diminishing the importance of the sector (Simmons, 2013), whereas the review presented the revocation as an 'opportunity' for developing more professionalism for the sector. Following the abolishment of the IfL, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) was established to replace it and to oversee new professional standards for teachers. As remarked by Tummons (2014), these are the third standards to be introduced since 2001, again signifying the policy flux associated with FE. As part of the ETF, the newly created Society for Education and Training (SET) was created in order to oversee the Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) and professional membership (ETF, n.d.).

Latterly, the direction of policy travel in FE has continued to focus upon skills development for employment and to drive up economic productivity, but it has maintained a broader ambition to enhance social mobility. However, social mobility is generally couched in terms of individual responsibility to gain skills in order to be employable, so arguably it is promoted from a particular, neoliberal angle. Most

recently the sector has undergone a period of Area Reviews whereby the sector has been through another period of rationalisation in order to have "fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers" (BIS, 2015, p.3). This has coincided with the *Post-16 Skills Plan (2016)* and Technical and Further Education Act 2017 whereby new technical level (T-Levels) qualifications will be created (starting September 2020) in 15 occupational areas to provide learners with a route into technical employment. These new T Level qualifications will largely be delivered by FECs, whilst schools are anticipated to continue to deliver the bulk of A-Level provision. This change in post-16 education will provide distinct pathways for students to follow at 16; either the 'academic' A-Level route or the 'technical' T-Level route. Whilst T-Levels are termed technical rather than vocational, Foster and Powell (2018) suggest they essentially mean, or will in practice, come to mean the same thing. Their introduction represents more change for FE and further reflects how FE again has to react to another raft of new qualifications. It also reflects how policy continues to facilitate the maintenance of the academic vs vocational divide in English education.

2.1.5 The academic vs vocational divide

The FE sector has suffered from historic divisions concerning the so-called academic versus vocational divide, with FE being firmly associated with lower status vocational provision and skills development, rather than higher status 'academic' education (Bowl, 2012). Indeed, Fisher and Simmons (2012) suggest issues regarding the absence of parity of esteem between vocational and academic provision reflect "deeply seated [in] institutional divisions and peculiarly English cultural attitudes" (p.38). The introduction of T-Levels may serve to reinforce this binary and propagate the stereotyped view that vocational learners are more 'practical' (often a proxy for 'less able') and prefer to avoid academic or theoretical aspects within their studies. This stereotype may contribute to perpetuating identities of FE students who may feel that they are 'less able' and of lower status when compared to those doing

academic qualifications. It may also sustain stereotyped views of some teachers who can have lower expectations of vocational students in FE (Brockmann and Laurie, 2016).

In summary, this review of policy and discourse has revealed how FE has been subject to an arguably disproportionate amount of policy churn and change since incorporation in April 1993. Described by Gleeson et al. (2015) as policy 'maelstrom', they suggest the pace of change has meant no policies have had sufficient time to establish themselves properly, leaving teachers and learners in an unsettling environment of flux.

The advent of neoliberalism has been enacted through a NPM approach to managing FECs, whereby auditing, monitoring, inspections, teaching observations and surveillance have proliferated, thereby serving as mechanisms for ensuring efficacy and compliance in a marketised sector. As Gleeson et al. (2015) remark, the managerialist regime has "raised the spectre of government and employer micromanagement of professionalism in the classroom and workplace" (p.80).

FE teachers operate in these challenging conditions whilst facing increasing learner diversity and breadth of course provision. They do this with a typical annual teaching load of around 864 hours. Once supported by the requirement for mandatory teacher education qualifications, the deregulation has been interpreted by some as deprofessionalising FE teachers, something that can result in uncertainty regarding professional identity. It can be indicative of the generally lower status FE enjoys relative to teachers in schools and can de-stablise FE teachers' own sense of professionalism. This is arguably compounded by the regularity by which teaching standards are introduced and subsequently revoked, and perhaps contributes in to part to the high attrition rates and low morale reported from within the sector (Edgington, 2017). High teaching loads and turbulence has left FE and its teachers

‘overburdened’ (Coffield, 2008) within an increasingly casualised and hostile environment (Daley, 2015).

Within this landscape teachers’ work is firmly orientated towards fulfilling the skills training agenda of successive governments. Despite some changes in nomenclature over time, this training is broadly vocational, rather than academic. Whilst upskilling the nation to ensure productivity and growth is a central focus, filling in numeracy, literacy and basic skills gaps ostensibly left by the school system, supporting apprenticeship programmes and delivering HE are also important functions, and illustrate how on-going government policies have stretched the boundaries within which FE operates. Policy changes since incorporation have broadened the age range and diversity of learners found within FECs. Given that many students in FE come from working class and underprivileged socio-economic backgrounds, the imperative to provide an inclusive experience which values social justice is increasingly important.

Having discussed the policy landscape of FE, I turn next to the HE sector. Given that HE in FE sits within FE and is more directly impacted by the FE context and its present and historical policy discourse, a comparatively greater emphasis has been placed upon discussing the FE sector. However, HE in FE is higher education and does need to be explored with consideration of its unique situation, whereby it effectively straddles both FE and HE sectors. The following section provides a broad overview as a means of providing greater context for the subsequent exploration of HE in FE as part of a sensitising literature review for a GT study.

2.1.6 Policy landscape and discourses in HE

Chapter 1 described some of the broad characteristics of the UK HE sector and the policies and changing ideologies, which catalysed its shift from an elite to a mass participation section. Within this section I do not intend to repeat earlier discussions

or provide forensic analysis of historical and policy details. Rather the aim is briefly to highlight some additional aspects of the HE sector as it is currently constituted in order to provide greater context to the HE in FE sector, and the HE in FE literature that is reviewed later within this chapter. HE in FE is part of the HE sector as a whole, so will inevitably be impacted (to a greater or lesser extent) by some of the wider narratives and policies within the mainstream HE sector.

Tomlinson (2014) suggests the move to massification has radically transformed HE "through expansion, diversification and the move towards a more market-driven agenda" (p.11). He further remarks how when compared to the past, twenty-century HE is part of a wider national and global economic context that is inherently unstable and uncertain (ibid.). As well as expansion with regard to student numbers, expansion also includes the number and type of providers. No longer the exclusive domain of universities, private and alternative providers of HE (which includes FECs) have been introduced. This has coincided with a move towards different models of HE to complement the traditional three-year degree. Currently with degree apprenticeships and, latterly, with foundation degrees, these alternative qualifications have been championed as enablers of access to HE, particularly for under-represented groups, thereby constituting a more 'diverse HE market' which positively contributes to WP and social mobility agendas (Bathmaker, 2016). Further, this more 'diverse HE market' has led to reforms making it easier for alternative providers to be granted university status and to gain degree awarding powers.

As with the FE sector, the UK HE sector has been influenced by, and operates within the same broad neoliberal landscape as described in section 2.1.3. As such the same principles of marketisation and competition to 'drive up standards' apply, although the discourse is arguably couched more in the language of 'employability', 'graduate attributes' the 'student experience' and 'student choice', than in the 'skills' discourse of FE. Again in common with FE, the policy discourse also reflects a

narrative of accessibility and the desire to welcome a broader range of learners who hitherto were not able or encouraged to pursue HE studies.

As stated in the 2009 *Higher ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy* report:

> Higher education equips people with the skills that globalisation and a knowledge economy demand, and thereby gives access to many of this country's best jobs. Everyone, irrespective of background, has a right to a fair chance to gain those advantages. This is vital, not just as a question of social justice and social mobility but also for meeting the economy's needs for high level skills. (BIS, 2009, p.3)

Whilst promoting social justice and inclusion, the narrative is firmly positioned within the prevailing neoliberal discourse whereby the connection between education and employment is promoted. Later government publications continue to advance the same neoliberal narratives in HE. The May 2016 *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice* white paper reaffirmed and advocated the principles of marketisation and competition, and reinforced their inherent connection with employment. It stated "Competition between providers in any market incentivises them to raise their game, offering consumers a greater choice of more innovative and better quality products and services at lower cost" (BIS, 2016, p.8). The paper further reports how "Universities provide an environment for deeper and wider learning, allowing for the development of analytical and creative thinking, objective inquiry and primary research. But evidence suggests that for most students, the most important outcome of higher education is finding employment" (ibid., p.11).

As described in Chapter 1 the notion of a degree affording enhanced employment prospects via the 'graduate premium' makes the 'investment' into a degree worthwhile. However, contemporary literature reports how "the prevailing critique of the effects of marketisation sees increasing forms of instrumentalism and more

stringent stakeholder demand as an inevitable consequence, and to the detriment of HE learning" (Tomlinson, 2014, p.11). Arguably the introduction of student loans and tuition fees is implicated in this shift and change in perceptions of what a degree is for and how, as paying consumers, the relationship between HE providers and students has been affected.

Following recommendations of the Dearing Report (Dearing, 1997) to introduce fees in HE, tuition fees have been part of the HE landscape for over a decade. Introduced in 2006, students paid £3000 per year. Following The Browne Review (Browne 2010) fees were raised (though capped) to £9000 per year from autumn 2012. This has subsequently been increased to £9250 per year. Naidoo and Williams (2015) argue that fees have shifted HE from being a public good to a "pay-as-you-go transaction" (p.211) which serves only to commodify education, and casts students as "customer beneficiaries" (ibid., p.208). Arguably this 'business transaction relationship' can increase the sense of entitlement a student may experience, particularly for a 'product or service' they are paying for and may feel dissatisfied with (Finney and Finney, 2010). Morgan (2013) further suggests that fees can embolden students, leading them to complain more, particularly about assessment grades they do not agree with.

A further consequence of fees concerns the immense financial pressures placed upon students. For many, paying for a degree and the economic and social imperative to obtain one to secure employment futures, is a high stakes endeavour, and one which can cause stress and pressure (Robotham and Julian, 2006). Students are paying and have to pass in order to see a return on their financial investment. Loans and fees can also deter students, particularly those from poorer backgrounds, from applying to study in HE because of the debt associated with it. This is supported by a recent study by Callender and Mason (2017). Conducted between 2002 and 2015, they reported that debt aversion in 2015 in working-class

students was “much stronger” (p.20) than in more affluent peers, resulting in working-class students being more likely to be deterred from undertaking HE study. Further, they found that the level of debt-related deterrent had increased when compared to data from 2002.

The prevailing discourse of student choice, of student voice and of competition has more recently created further shifts in the HE landscape. The publication of league tables and rankings, performance data, e.g. Key Information Sets (KIS) and the use of the National Student Survey (NSS) to capture student views on their student experience, are all part of an architecture of metrics and accountability (Tomlinson, 2017). Concerns regarding teaching quality is a particular refrain in contemporary literature. Once largely concerned with research and with teaching viewed by some as a less ‘important’ aspect of the work of a university, the ‘student as paying consumer’ narrative as been instrumental in the drive to enhance the quality of teaching in the HE sector. Student criticisms concerning value for money, and in response to perceived criticisms about teaching quality, HE discourse and policy has moved in order to professionalise teachers and drive up standards. The introduction of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) to provide staff CPD, and the introduction of the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) are indicative of the improvement, ‘measure and feedback’ culture within the contemporary HE sector. Most recently The Higher Education and Research Act led to the creation of the Office for Students (OfS). Incepted on January 1, 2018, its remit is one of being “explicitly pro-competition and pro-student choice” (BIS, 2016, p.15), and further signifies the power of the student voice in a marketised and comodified landscape.

This review illustrates how the neoliberal landscape described in section 2.1.3 forms (albeit with differing emphases, metrics and levers) the backdrop for both the FE and HE sectors. As such, students in both sectors are pursuing qualifications, which are

broadly aimed at equipping them with skills (in the broadest sense) for employment. The following section reviews how these policy agendas and narratives from the two sectors are translated into the particular context of HE in FE. As with this review of the HE sector, I do not intend to repeat earlier discussions or provide forensic analysis of historical and policy details. The purpose is to draw on both sectors in order to situate HE in FE and to preface the review of the HE in FE literature.

2.1.7 HE in FE landscape and discourses – a unique context

As described in Chapter 1 (see section 1.3) the Dearing Report (1997) saw FECs as being the ideal type of institution to offer sub-degree qualifications. HE in FE was afforded a 'special mission' to provide local, vocational HE to those with "non-standard entry qualifications and more diverse aspirations" (Dearing, p.100). Since Dearing, foundation degrees have been the primary vehicle for sub-degree provision.

Like FE and HE, HE in FE is part of the wider neoliberal landscape as discussed. As such, FE colleges with HE provision are subject to the same marketised and competitive challenges experienced by the general FE and HE sectors. HE in FE can provide colleges with a valuable and much needed income stream, especially during times of FE budget cuts and wider national austerity agendas (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). But unlike either mainstream FE, i.e. that with no HE, or mainstream HE, i.e. universities, HE in FE is impacted by both sets of discourses and challenges. An FEC with HE provision will still be subject to the performativity and audit culture as discussed in section 2.1.3. It will be subject to Ofsted and to the surveillance culture of classroom observations, all within an environment with students broadly characterised as being from disadvantaged or working-class backgrounds, and often with lower academic confidence and capital. Like its students, it will have teachers from diverse vocational backgrounds who will have high teaching loads. Arguably these will broadly constitute the cultural backdrop of an FEC. Given that HE in an FEC typically accounts for "the minority of the student body… [on] a very small

number of courses" (Tummons and Ingleby, 2014, p.93), the FE discourse and culture is reasonably expected to be the one which will predominate.

But HE in FE, as a part of an FEC, will be aligned to narratives of vocationalism and widening access, as well as to the same (albeit to differing degrees) discourses and challenges experienced by the HE sector. The NSS, TEF, being subject to QAA Higher Education Review (HER), providing KIS data, and student fees will all impact upon HE in FE. FECs with HE face the same pressures to be competitive in order to ensure they remain financial viable. Arguably, they will face the same challenges of the 'student as paying customer' discourse, the concern over student expectations and entitlement brought about by tuition fees and the pressure to gain an HE qualification in order to secure a 'good job', and the same public scrutiny with publication of QAA HER reports and other data by which students will rate and compare them and their provision (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016). The unique dual positioning of HE in FE presents unique challenges, with HE in FE arguably being 'stretched' in order to keep pace with the expectations of both their FE and their HE remits (Henderson, 2017).

This discussion of each of the sectors has articulated how wider global and national economic and educational policies and discourses have contributed to HE in FE coming to prominence and establishing itself as a distinct part of the wider HE landscape. Further, it has described how these have shaped the particular ways in which HE in FE is conceived and orientated in FE colleges. Having established the context, at this juncture it is worth reminding that this is a study of teacher pedagogic practices in HE in FE. Therefore, as a necessary part of providing additional context to foreground the ensuing review of HE in FE literature, it is essential to provide a definition of pedagogy and of pedagogic practice.

2.1.8 Pedagogy and pedagogic practice – Broad definitions

Watkins and Mortimore (1999) suggest pedagogy is “a contested term” (p.1). They remark how it can be viewed as “the science of teaching” (ibid., p.2), whereas others view pedagogy in terms of being more akin to a craft. Their definition rests upon pedagogy being “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (ibid., p.3). In contrast, Greenwood (2010a) characterises pedagogy in an arguably more singular manner with her position attending to that of the profession of teaching, instruction and strategies of instruction. Interestingly, she neglects to include learning within her definition. More aligned to the definitions presented by Watkins and Mortimore (1999), Lucas et al. (2012) conceive of pedagogy as “the science, art, and craft of teaching. Pedagogy also fundamentally includes the decisions which are taken in the creation of the broader learning culture in which the teaching takes place, and the values which inform all interactions” (p.14). Finally, Westbrook et al. (2013) define pedagogy as “ideas, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and understanding about the curriculum, the teaching and learning process and their students, and which impact on their ‘teaching practices’, that is, what teachers actually think, do and say in the classroom” (p.7). It is this definition that is used within this thesis to frame the subsequent discussions and theorising about this study of HE teacher pedagogic practice at Shireland College. How I arrived at this position is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (section 3.4).

As described in Chapter 1, this study is sensitised with notions of practice as espoused by the sociomaterial, anti-dualist Practice Theory (PT) of Schatzki and of Kemmis and Grootenboer. A Practice Theory conception of practice adopts a very particular philosophical position, and has particular meanings within its orientation towards people, physical places, non-human material objects and artefacts (PT is discussed in full in Chapter 4 along with how this particular conception of practice influences the methodology).

Being a GT study, this literature review stage serves to sensitise me as a GT researcher by accounting for the broad geography of the HE in FE literature. In order to gain this overarching view of the contemporary HE in FE literature, at this stage I frame pedagogic practice around the widely accepted and understood terms of 'practice' associated with teachers and teaching. As such, practices that are observable and which can be taken include teaching strategies, approaches and techniques. It is reasonable to suggest that contemporary teaching and learning/pedagogy/practice literature concerning HE in FE will likely have been framed in these terms, rather than in the terms of practice imposed by scholars from the PT tradition.

Having established these definitions, I continue to outline conceptions of pedagogy and of pedagogic practice associated with FE and with HE. As with any definition, they are open to criticism and are contested within the literature. However, I offer what might be broadly accepted as 'typical' characterisations of what pedagogy and pedagogic practice might reasonably consist of and 'look like'. This is not to stereotype or to place any kind of value judgement on either FE or HE. It is not an attempt to present a crude binary whereby one might be presented as being 'better' than the other. As previously established, FE and HE do, on some levels, share many broad aims including those of teaching students to enable them to develop necessary skills for the workplace and employment. Therefore, I frame these conceptions in the wider policy and discourse landscape (as discussed previously) as a means of establishing connections with policy and practice in the two sectors.

2.1.9 Pedagogy and pedagogic practice – HE

Arguably, there is no single, clear-cut definition of what an HE pedagogy 'looks like'. As the definitions of pedagogy at the beginning of this section illustrate, pedagogy is a contested term. What is outlined here is not necessarily exclusive to HE. FE might

equally engage in the approaches discussed, but I present them by way of illustrating what might reasonably be viewed as being a 'typical' pedagogic approach to HE.

Traditionally an HE pedagogy broadly centered on the lecture and on seminars where students might lead or present, discuss and debate. Assessments might typically be characterised in terms of extended and sophisticated academic writing skills (particularly the dissertation), requirements for primary research data collection, examinations, comparatively few contact hours and a significant emphasis upon independent study and learner autonomy. Ultimately, the development of higher order thinking skills and developing notions of knowledge as contingent and contestable underpin HE pedagogy (Lea and Simmons, 2012). This development is facilitated by teaching staff who (to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon the type of HEI they work in) have a dual role of teacher and researcher, or at least teacher within a climate underpinned by scholarly activity and research. As stated by the QAA (2012, p.13):

> Scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education, but their nature will depend on the academic level of the programme, the subject area and the provider or providers of the programme. Scholarship may include conventional research (discovery of new knowledge), innovative application or integration of existing knowledge, for example in professional practice, or the study of learning and teaching processes and practices.

Arguably, this model broadly continues, but it has undergone changes in recent times. Traditionally, the lecture acted as a didactic instrument of teacher-centered knowledge transmission (Schmidtn et al., 2015; Schreurs and Dumbraveanu, 2014). With large groups of students (often in the hundreds), this "stand and deliver" (Reeves and Reeves, 2011, p.134) pedagogy to transmit and reproduce knowledge formed the mainstay of the pedagogic practice of those teaching in HE (French and Kennedy, 2017). However, as described earlier, the changing neoliberal landscape with its prevailing discourse of marketisation, competition, and the student voice have

begun to precipitate change towards more student-centered pedagogic approaches. The prevailing discourse of the 'student as customer' and 'value for money', has led to students having a "more assertive… sense of entitlement" (Temple et al., p.4) and HE teachers having "powerful concerns about their NSS scores" (ibid., p.14). Concerns about adopting instrumental pedagogic practices to 'keep students happy' and to put students in a better position to achieve high marks are not unheard of (Wong and Chiu, 2017). Increasing criticism from students regarding teaching quality (echoed by government in their *Students at the heart of the system* (BIS, 2011) white paper, where improvements to teaching were demanded and with the introduction of the TEF) has contributed to this shift in approach. Changes have included the use technology, flipped classrooms and online learning, as well smaller group teaching as ways to develop more student-centred approaches.

Despite these changes and prevailing neoliberal climate that dominates education, what arguably differentiates the HE teacher from the FE teacher is that of autonomy, by which I mean the freedom granted to teachers and its relationship with what pedagogic practices they can reasonably enact in their classrooms. The managerialist audit culture precipitated by neoliberalism has impacted upon HE teachers, but unlike FE, they are not subject to the same level of classroom intrusion. Predicated upon notions of peer review, HE does not have the external scrutiny of Ofsted (Lea and Simmons, 2012) and its standardized and homogeneous 'best practice' conception of teaching to contend with (Gleeson et al., 2015). Nor does it have the regular management observations of teaching often characterised as being punitive rather than developmental. Whilst the imperative to get good student feedback scores is increasingly important for HE teachers, they are afforded more space and scope to shape the content and pedagogic practices. Whilst HE pedagogic practices will necessarily differ between disciplines and vocational subjects, the premise of relative autonomy in the classroom (within the bounds of the

curriculum) is one that is a hallmark of HE.

2.1.10. Pedagogy and pedagogic practice – FE

As discussed, FE can broadly be conceived as being vocational and concerned with learner skills development for employment. This is achieved with a workforce of teachers who are predominantly orientated towards vocationalism. Whilst some FE teachers will engage in research and scholarship this is not a primary function of their role. Because FECs are "essentially teaching-only establishments, with… provision at Levels 3, 2, 1 and Entry Level" (Parry, 2012, p.52), as opposed to institutions with a specific research remit, Penfold (2017) argues research and scholarly activity are not perceived as core features or strengths of FE.

2.1.11 Vocational Pedagogies in FE

Given its skills focus, a vocational pedagogy might reasonably be said to characterise approaches typically adopted in FE. Ingle and Duckworth (2013) define a vocational pedagogy as one that has a "clear focus on subject context, the real world of work and on developing [our] learners practical, applied skills" (p.22). Similarly, Avis (2014) draws attention to the connection between developing skills for work. However, in contrast to understandings of vocational education in other parts of the world, he suggests that a UK conception of vocational education is comparatively narrow, privileging practical knowledge over knowledge within an instrumental pedagogy constrained by adhering to 'standards'. Avis (2002) further suggests that without the inclusion of 'really useful knowledge' vocational pedagogies can sustain marginalised identities of FE learners who are most likely to undertaking vocational programmes.

Usher (2009) characterises vocational pedagogy as reflecting a neoliberal agenda, whereby neoliberalism has redefined the relationship between pedagogy, knowledge and the labour market. A vocational pedagogy is one based upon people needing

“flexibility, continuous learning, social skills and flexible competencies, rather than subject-based knowledge” (p.175). This reflects earlier calls from the Wolf Review (2011) to provide more generalised skills provision in FE to give learners greater flexibility in uncertain labour markets. In contrast to Avis (2002), Usher (2009) argues that a vocational pedagogy can be seen as way of democratising education by recognising other forms of knowledge and by its emphasis upon experiential learning. It does not privilege the elite knowledge associated with subjects and disciplines found in the traditional university HE sector. However, as Avis (2002) maintained, the need for this kind of specialised, more abstract knowledge is essential for vocational pedagogies. Without it, Wheelahan (2015) suggests it may not give learners the sort of “theoretical knowledge they need to participate in debates and controversies in societies… [and] enable[s] them to participate in ‘society’s conversation’ and their occupational fields of practice” (pp.751–752).

Usher (2009) also cautions that the emphasis towards skills without abstract knowledge can result in an instrumental alignment to “sets of behavioural objectives” (p.176) to demonstrate “the correct answer in the most efficient way” (ibid.). Whilst skills can empower learners to become “more competent and ‘employable’” (ibid.), Usher continues by suggesting how a vocational pedagogy can demote pedagogy to that of being a “technical matter directed to imparting a canon of knowledge” (p.179), often from a narrow knowledge base. This appears to be supported by Esmond and Wood (2017) with their contention that vocational areas closest to workplace practice emphasise theoretical abstraction the least, privileging “direct demonstration and practice of workbased skills” (p.230). Hyland (2006) also comments that a behaviourist approach to vocational education associated with ‘ticking off’ observable, practical competencies damages and diminishes the value of vocational education, rendering it to that of a “utilitarian experience” (p.304).

This behaviourist approach without abstract knowledge has potential implications for

vocational students not only in terms of what they know and can do, but also in terms of “equity and justice” (Bathmaker, 2013, p.88) and enhancing life chances. Despite its potential to democratise education, vocational pedagogies can do the opposite if they are perceived as comprising of lower value knowledges and skills, which may serve to confine vocational students to particular types of employment and life opportunities.

2.1.12 Personalisation and instrumentalism in FE – a conflict of interests?

Whilst a vocational pedagogy predominates in FE, a small group pedagogy of care for learners who are often “disadvantaged and marginalised” (Simmons, 2016, p.695) is also a distinctive feature. Treating students as individuals and considering their backgrounds and life histories is further defining feature of pedagogies in FE (Busher et al., 2015). The use of student-centred, personalised pedagogic practices to support academic and emotional development of self-esteem and confidence also underpin FE (Chowdhry, 2014). Lumby (2007) suggests the success of FE can be attributed to the social and experiential learning orientation of pedagogies within it. Such pedagogic approaches are strongly influenced by social justice agendas that seek to transform the lives of learners. As discussed, the neoliberal discourse in education has not escaped FE. Indeed, the performativity and surveillance culture is well established and is arguably more acute than the performativity and managerialist cultures in HE. Maxted (2015) suggests many FE teachers are motivated to defend social justice and adopt transformative, emancipatory pedagogies with learners from disadvantaged socio-economic groups who often have complex needs. However, against the FE backdrop of managerialism and performativity, Simmons (2016) suggests vocational education has “been recast along increasingly instrumental lines” (p.693). Characterised by Groves (2015) as FE pedagogic practices reflecting “input-output processes” (p.32), she attributes this to teachers being fearful of adopting pedagogic practices beyond that which is “safely

orthodox" (ibid., p.33) for fear of reprimand by managers who use "constant punitive monitoring" (ibid., p.32) to manage teachers and teaching. Groves further argues that monitoring of teaching results in pedagogic practices, which are restricted and reductionist, a view supported by Gleeson et al. (2015). They maintain this has created an approach to pedagogic practices that attend to developing surface rather than deep knowledge in FE learners, thereby creating "a low skills ceiling that reduces learner progression" (p.90). Brockmann and Laurie (2016) are critical of this and suggest this serves only to sustain prevailing 'academic vs vocational divide' discourses that characterise vocational learners as only being able to 'do', rather than to cope with anything 'academic'.

The existence of a limited and tightly prescribed model of pedagogy is supported by Maxted (2015), who claims FE curricula are congested and too focussed upon assessing to provide evidence, rather than on learning. Maxted (2015) argues FE pedagogic practices are "epitomised by bite-size sound-bite" (p.39) teaching that is focused on outcomes, rather than upon the development of learners through individualised pedagogic approaches. Evidence of achievement is inextricably linked to funding, therefore this is can be a powerful driver behind the use of such pedagogic approaches. The over-assessed curricula in FE can also result in teachers adopting pedagogic approaches aligned more towards coaching to ensure students achieve. Indeed, Smith (2017) argues how the role of FE teachers has mutated into that of "a life/career coach who helps students to navigate their course through a menu of assessments" (p.868).

2.1.13 Critical Pedagogies

These concerns have left many FE teachers feeling alienated by the prevailing discourses described (Chowdhry, 2014). Daley (2015) is critical of such discourses, suggesting how it "disempowers both students and staff as it raises the economic imperatives above all else" (p.17). Despite the concerns and challenges of FE,

Maxted (2015) maintains how FE teachers try to make a “determined effort” (p.37) to enact alternative pedagogies to challenge the hegemony of an FE sector dominated by neoliberalism. Conceived as critical pedagogy, it is an approach whereby teachers strive to emphasise social justice and empowerment of their learners. Simmons (2016) cautions that critical pedagogy is a contested term and is not a “unified project” (p 698), but can broadly be traced back to Friere, Habermas, Giroux and Apple, *inter alia*. By raising awareness of how the educational system disadvantages particular groups, it can allow learners opportunities to better understand their location within it. Therefore, by extension, questioning and challenging these inherent inequalities in the system through critical pedagogies can afford the possibility of resisting inequality and effecting change (Sandars, 2017; Simmons, 2016; Avis and Bathmaker, 2004; Burbules and Berk, 1999). Simmons (2016) remarks how FE historically was more aligned to critical pedagogy when it provided more liberal curricula in the era prior to incorporation. During this period, he suggests, FE teachers had some freedom and space to enact critical pedagogic practices. Since then, in concert with the advent of the managerialist regimes, which are now firmly established in FE, these spaces are difficult to create and vanishingly rare. The regime of monitoring and audit has arguably led to the enactment of increasingly performative pedagogic practices as described. But Clare (2015) suggests there is resistance to it from FE teachers who seek to subvert it. But she concedes this is often ad hoc with critical pedagogic opportunities and critical spaces being limited by the congested curricula and the need to ‘deliver’ content quickly, and for learners to achieve. Whilst Groves (2015) is clear that FE pedagogies need to “rebalance instrumentalism with an empowering approach” (p.32), how this might realistically be enacted across FE is debatable given the pervasiveness of neoliberal culture. Simmons (2016) argues that enacting more critical and less instrumental pedagogies is problematic within a teaching and learning climate, which is circumscribed by tightly prescribed external limitations and monitoring.

These discussions regarding policy and pedagogy have identified how neoliberal discourses in HE and in FE abound. With a view to prefacing HE in FE pedagogy literature I have sought to present what might be commonly understood conceptions regarding pedagogy and pedagogic practices in FE. Primarily vocational, FE has particular orientations towards skills for work, with pedagogies that can privilege practical competence over knowledge, and pedagogies that can tend towards instrumentalism by virtue of an entrenched neoliberal culture. FE is a demanding and turbulent sector where vocational teachers have limited autonomy, and work in a culture of performativity and surveillance, predominantly with learners from deprived backgrounds and those with complex needs. Despite significant challenges, it is driven by underlying principles of care, of social justice and of transformation. In spite of the alienation and feeling of compromise and 'erosion' of values experienced by FE teachers (Duckworth et al., 2010), the literature suggests there are few spaces for teachers to enact more critically orientated pedagogies as a result of the performativity and surveillance culture.

It is within this environment that HE in FE situated and teacher pedagogies are enacted. Having established this landscape, I continue by reviewing the HE in FE literature to sensitise me to the broad geography of HE in FE. As mentioned, to be consistent with a GT literature review as conceived by constructivist grounded theorists, this review provides a "limited and purposive preliminary review… to give early enhancement of theoretical sensitivity" (Birks and Mills, 2015, p.23).

2.1.14 HE in FE literature review – themes

Traditionally considered to be an under-researched area of education, interest in HE in FE has developed considerably during the last 10 to 15 years (Kadi-Hanifi and Elliott, 2016). As described previously, the advent of the Dearing Report (1997) gave FECs a prominent role in delivering sub-degree qualifications. Further, New Labour's policy for 50 per cent participation in HE also enhanced the profile of HE in FE, and

stimulated greater interest in undertaking research to explore it more closely (Parry et al., 2012).

In terms of the nature and remit of the contemporary literature base, Henderson (2017) remarks how it can be split into that which seeks to compare the HE in an FEC with that of HE within a university, and that which focuses upon the perceived benefits and distinctive character of HE in FE. Within this "limited and purposive preliminary review" (Birks and Mills, 2015, p.23) I present the HE in FE literature thematically, an approach that encompasses the greater dimensions and breadth of literature than the binary of Henderson (2017) suggests.

Broadly, the literature can be viewed as coalescing around a number of themes including policy, partnerships and quality assurance (much of which has been described earlier within this chapter), e.g. validations, franchises, arrangement with universities, Widening Participation and the distinctive nature of HE in FE, teacher and student HE identity/experience, student transitions (from FE to HE and from HE in FE to a top up year at a university), and 'HEness', e.g. HE culture and ethos in an FEC. Most recently, the lines of interest have increasingly been drawn towards scholarly activity and research (which includes scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)) within HE in FE. In addition to these themes I also include pedagogy. I acknowledge that this approach to identifying and organising by theme is entirely personal and may well not reflect the ways in which others might seek to classify this literature. However, I do so on the basis of logicality and what affords the most sensible 'fit' under the broad thematic headings I have presented. Framing this review around these themes, I intend to touch upon key papers and studies in order to signpost the broad geography of the HE in FE landscape and to present a contemporary view of the HE in FE landscape and the discourses within it. Given the nature of this thesis, I necessarily devote greater attention to those works which, to a greater or larger extent, are concerned with teaching and pedagogy in their broadest

sense (as discussed in section 2.2).

2.1.15 Policy, partnerships and quality assurance

Policies that precipitated the advent of HE in FE becoming a more recognised HE provider, e.g. Dearing Report (1997) etc., have been discussed previously (see section 1.4). As a consequence of the emergence of HE in FE, early literature perhaps inevitably reported how partnerships between colleges and universities were taking shape in the newly drawn landscape of HE in FE. In concert with this, HEFCE and the QAA published a series of guides to support colleges with their HE provision. This was in part to recognise their role in providing HE, and in part to ensure FECs were providing comparable standards of HE. Most recently, these publications have been orientated towards guidance for FECs seeking to gain FDAP, illustrating how far HE in FE has come and how much it has developed since Dearing. Prior to guidance on FDAP the orientation of guidance was arguably more broad. Within *Supporting higher education in further education colleges: a guide for tutors and Lecturers* (HEFCE, 2003), information and guidance regarding: i) The context for higher education in further education; ii) Developing higher level skills; iii) Curriculum development; iv) Assessment; v) Marketing and recruitment; vi) Academic advice and support: the student life-cycle; vii) Working in partnership; viii) Management and planning; ix) Staffing and staff development; and x) Quality assurance and enhancement was provided. Within a collection of 'good practice' FE college case studies the report emphasised the need to support 'higher-level skills' for HE students, but omitted to include what these were and what classroom practices might be adopted in order to do this. Whilst expressing the imperative that "clear efforts must then be made to offer the step from FE to HE" (HEFCE, 2003, p.6) with teachers' "facilitating the gradual transition to more independent learning" (ibid. p.6), no articulation of practice was presented. Whilst it did not mention pedagogy per se, it did implicitly signal that there was a 'step', i.e. a difference between FE and HE and

it did mention developing independent learning and critical thinking, but not how to achieve this and not how to do so within an FE context.

HE in FE continued to be subject to greater interest and regulatory scrutiny following HEFCE's *Request for higher education strategies from further education colleges* (HEFCE 2009a) whereby all colleges offering HE were required to submit a strategic plan. Specifically, HEFCE declared how they expected colleges to be "more strategic about their HE to enhance and strengthen their provision. Although much of HE in FECs is very successful, there is undoubtedly some provision that has not been planned as strategically as it might have been and is not well connected to progression opportunities" (p.3). They detailed how colleges would need to include information regarding "continuing professional development; scholarly activity; resourcing of staff, facilities, equipment and learning materials; curriculum development" (p.4). This specifically raised the issue of the need for scholarship within HE in FE.

This was swiftly followed (May 2009) by a further HEFCE report – *Supporting Higher Education in Further Education Colleges. Policy, practice and prospects* (HEFCE, 2009b). Essentially an updated and expanded version of their 2003 report (*Supporting higher education in further education colleges: a guide for tutors and Lecturers),* the 231-page document included a number of good practice case studies from colleges and broad coverage about policy and course development. Brief mentions about teaching HE included the need for HE in FE course teams to establish "a consensus on the characteristics of higher level skills, and approaches to teaching them" (p.26). It further advocated the need for students to develop critical analysis skills as an independent learner. No detail was included regarding how these ideals might be enacted. Interestingly, and in concert with other commentators, the report did caution about the "close contact with staff teaching on HE programmes

in an FEC is a great support to students, but it can be a disadvantage if they have not also learned to be independent learners" (p.153). The recurring theme in all of these publications did perhaps echo other emerging concerns from commentators about the challenges of delivering HE in an FEC. For example, Creasy (2013) published a peer-reviewed paper – *HE lite: exploring the problematic position of HE in FECs* – arguing that FE was not necessarily best placed to deliver HE. Not based on any primary data from the field, Creasy (2013) cited a number of papers contending that "HE staff within FECs do not necessarily engage with HE teaching practices" (p.49), resulting in the HE within FE being diminished and of reduced quality.

A large scale Department for Business, Innovation and Skills government report (authored by Parry et al., 2012) - *Understanding Higher Education in Further Education Colleges* – was significant in that it attempted to provide an all encompassing review of HE in FE in its entirety. Including data from interviews with teachers and students, and a range of college case studies, it covered a range of aspects including HE in FE context, policy, widening participation, funding, contracts and teaching hours. Whilst comprehensive, it did not particularly reveal anything hitherto unknown. However, data from a student focus group revealed how students expressed a 'dilemma' being in a college environment. Whilst the small groups and personal attention from tutors was viewed positively, concern for the HE in FE environment as being one where tutors "spoon fed" (p.122) students was also raised.

Whilst HE in FE continued to be generally positively received as being a vehicle for social mobililty and inclusion, issues concerning the nature of the teacher and student relationship, teaching approaches and the college culture began to surface in the literature (see *inter alia* Lea and Simmons, 2012; Fenge, 2011). These are discussed presently.

More recent publications from the QAA concern how FECs might gain FDAP. In the light of changes to the sector where a number of large 'super colleges' have become established (often as a result of merging/taking over smaller competitors), some colleges are seeking to break away from a validating university partner. Following the The Further Education and Training Bill (2006) whereby the process of gaining such powers became more simplified (and was encouraged as a means of creating a more 'diverse HE market'), some FECs have pursued this. The QAA's (2013) *Guidance on scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff: Expectations for Foundation Degree-awarding powers and for taught degree-awarding powers*, is clear about the requirement for colleges to have robust teaching and pedagogy policies in place if they are to be successful in gaining FDAP. The guidance confirmed how all teaching staff engaged with the delivery of their higher education programmes must have "relevant knowledge and understanding of current scholarly developments in their discipline area and at a level appropriate to a Foundation Degree and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching" (p.2). Significantly this knowledge of HE should be such that it was able to "distinguish[ing] higher education from training or the acquisition of skills alone" (ibid.) Pedagogical effectiveness was bound up with notions of scholarly activity, i.e. studying for higher degrees, publishing, commercial consultancy etc. Whilst the report did not advocate particular pedagogic practices for HE, it signaled a further move to emphasise the distinction between FE and HE and the need for HE teaching to be something more than 'higher skills'. Further it reiterated the imperative for scholarship to be seen as an integral part of HE within colleges. Given some of the criticism levelled at HE in FE regarding the way in which scholarship was being embraced (or not) in HE in FE, this publication also signals the changing status of HE in FE from that of junior partner to, in the cases of the large 'super colleges', an independent provider free to provide and award HE qualifications without the fetters imposed by a university partner.

Finally, The QAA (2015) published a guidance document – *College Higher Education Toolkit: Engaging with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education* – primarily for colleges to benchmark against in terms of meeting the requirements of the QAA Quality Code. Featuring brief 'good practice' examples from colleges concerning the creation of an HE ethos, it recommended that "enhancing the research abilities of college staff is likely to have a positive impact on their teaching and helps to develop a higher education ethos among staff and students" (p.34). It further advocated "developing web-based teaching resources tailored specifically to support the development of higher education teaching practices" (p.40).

2.1.16 Widening participation and distinctive nature of HE in FE

As discussed earlier within the chapter, part of the evolution of HE in FE was driven by government imperatives to widen access to groups who had previously not engaged in HE. Championed as being a cornerstone of improving social mobility and providing higher skilled workers for the labour market, HE in FE was differentiated from university HE by virtue of its focus on local students, for local labour markets, within small and supported classroom environments. As soon as Foundation Degrees began to take a foothold in the HE sector, the 'distinctiveness' of HE in FE became a strong feature of the discourse. Within the 2004 publication by the now defunct Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) (*Difference, diversity and distinctiveness: Higher education in the learning and skills sector* by Gareth Parry, a leading HE in FE commentator from the university sector), 'distinctiveness' was reported as being smaller classes and greater intimacy in teaching and learning groups. Further, an 'FE ethos' of student-centred delivery, and individual support was presented as being key to defining the distinctive nature of HE in FE. It is presumed these features were considered as being positive aspects of HE in FE, though none of them were articulated further within the publication. Like earlier literature, aspects such as 'student-centred delivery' were not explained; pedagogic practices were not

articulated.

Other literature around that time also reported the positive nature of HE in FE with regard to the nature of the student support provided for its predominantly WP student demographic. Bathmaker et al. (2008) (*Dual-sector further and higher education: policies, organisations and students in transition*) contributed to the literature by reporting findings from the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) FurtherHigher Project within their peer-reviewed article. The overall project was to explore divisions between FE and HE with regard to widening participation (WP). The paper included empirical data from 8 dual sector colleges, i.e. those offering FE and HE courses including interviews from 20 senior college leaders, 45 teachers and 82 HE students from HE in FE.

Of the limited attention paid to broad aspects of pedagogy the paper reinforced earlier literature with regard to HE in FE being 'distinctive' by virtue of its "smaller teaching groups in colleges compared to universities and the role of the college teacher in directly supporting the learning of students" (p.134). How this distinctiveness manifested itself as pedagogic practices was not revealed. The paper did report some contradictions to earlier literature regarding the positive way in which support and small classes were presented. In their study Bathmaker et al. (2008) reported how some HE in FE teachers suggested

> "supportive structures of teaching and learning in further education, such as open door policies for student support, the extensive use of formative assessment and the availability of numerous assessment opportunities on some vocational pathways: a set of practices ('spoon feeding') considered at odds with the demands of higher education and therefore equally inappropriate on courses preparing students for these levels" (p.134).

More recent discourse and literature has continued to change the emphasis from that of HE in FE being a positive vehicle for social mobility, to one where this narrative is being challenged. Once championed for opening up opportunities for disadvantaged

groups, more recent literature has begun to question the success of its social justice ambitions. For some, HE in FE represents the bottom rung in a vertical hierarchy of HE, which can serve to sustain and reproduce social inequalities, rather than overcoming them (Bathmaker, 2016; Avis and Orr, 2016). Talking about HE in FE students, Henderson (2017) suggests the discourse of support serves only to pathologise HE in FE WP students by portraying them as "vulnerable, as local, as driven by the practicalities of career-focused education, and as worried about money" (p.11). In so doing it sustains the narrative that this lower status HE is the only HE available to them; that because of their backgrounds university-based HE is not within their reach. Other recent literature appears to confirm this shift towards challenging earlier narratives. Further, Avis and Orr (2016) suggest HE in FE graduates do not earn as much as their university graduate counterparts. Whereas Bathmaker (2016) suggests the 'distinctiveness' of HE in FE has perhaps changed from the original conception, i.e. that of small, friendly and supported teaching for WP students, to being distinctive in terms of being "the local, low-cost alternative for those disadvantaged and underserved students who do not have the resources to participate in more prestigious and more expensive alternatives" (p.28).

2.1.17 Teacher and student HE identity/experience

As discussed previously, most HE in FE students are drawn from WP backgrounds and most HE in FE teachers are vocationally orientated. Literature regarding the experience of teachers in HE in FE has broadly reported recurring themes regarding the difficulties of teaching HE in an FEC. These often described issues with time and the challenges of teaching across a wide range of academic levels. Other challenges included the amount of support required for HE in FE students. Whilst the QAA (2006) reported how support was "readily available and willingly given" (p.9) to HE in FE students, the amount of support required was perceived by some, as being

significant. This is supported by Golding Lloyd and Griffiths (2008) who suggest "students studying for higher education programmes in a further education college require more support than might be supposed" (p.16). Whilst the nature of the support was not qualified within their paper, it chimes with other literature regarding WP students and their perceived needs when studying HE (*inter alia* Henderson, 2017). Often these concerns were foregrounded with the additional challenge of the college often struggling to establish an HE culture (this is discussed presently).

Describing such concerns, Turner et al. (2009a) published a peer-reviewed paper – *Emerging HE cultures: perspectives from CETL award holders in a partner college network* – using questionnaire (n=19) and interview (n=9) data from three FE colleges. Specifically, those interviewed were HE in FE teachers from the university college consortium who had received an award from the partner university in recognition of their contribution to learning and teaching. The paper explored the participant experiences of teaching HE in FE and focused not on pedagogy *per se*, but upon participant perceptions of the impact of HE expansion in colleges; perceptions of university HE culture and the emerging HE culture in colleges. Within these discussions teachers described the challenges of teaching across FE and HE boundaries and the expectation to "balance the competing demands of HE and FE teaching" (p.259). What these demands were was not articulated, but their comment serves to illustrate the existance of challenges for those teaching across FE and HE.

A further paper by Turner et al. (2009b) – '*Square peg – round hole': the emerging professional identities of HE in FE lecturers working in a partner college network in south west England* – included interviews with HE in FE teachers (n=12) from four partner colleges, all of which had significant experience of delivering HE in FE. Not explicitly aimed at discussing pedagogy and teaching practices, some teaching approaches were mentioned. The interviews were framed around participant perceptions of the role of university lecturers, and how these compared and

contrasted with their HE in FE role. Participants were also asked to discuss what support they had to enable them in their HE teaching role. The participants confirmed the “very different audiences, teaching styles, quality assurance protocols and assessment regimes” (p.362) between FE and HE. Teachers commented negatively about “switching between HE and FE throughout the working week” (p.362) and portrayed themselves as something of ‘jack of all trades’ as a consequence of their dual FE and HE identities.

With reference to HE, they described their HE teaching practices as ‘holistic’ because of the non-traditional nature of the HE students, thereby including more emphasis on considering “specific learning needs of their students” (p.360). As part of this holistic approach teachers reported “drawing on their expertise in supporting FE learners and integrating this with their perceptions of the role an HE lecturer should perform” (p.361). What expertise this was and how this was integrated was not described. Somewhat in contradiction to this, teachers further reported how they did use different teaching styles for HE, those which “would not necessarily be suited to their FE students or an accepted mode of FE teaching, particularly in relation to FE quality systems” (ibid.). This is presumably with reference to the prescribed Ofsted approach to teaching as described earlier. The majority of participants further commented how the subject matter covered at FE and HE was the same. Rather, it was the *way* in which they taught it that differed, with the emphasis being on promoting student autonomy. How this differentiation manifested itself was not explained beyond approaches being “a bit more involved, it’s a bit more detailed…I think the way that we assess our expectations on students is different, I am expecting more research, more analysis to be presented” (pp.360–361). Whilst reporting challenges of working in HE in FE, how or why teachers actually changed their teaching approach was not articulated, but it did at least indicate that some kind of change was deemed necessary to be made between FE and HE.

The narrative of challenge and HE teacher identity was covered by Feather in a series of peer-reviewed papers published between 2010 and 2016. The data emanated from an EdD study specifically exploring HE in FE business studies teachers and their HE teacher identity. His work continues to be widely cited, despite the fact the data is over ten years old. Using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and one focus group (n=4), 26 lecturers at 12 UK FE colleges in the north of England participated in the study. Not looking at pedagogy explicitly, Feather observed particular challenges of teaching HE in FE and cited examples of how HE was taught and particular pedagogic practices adopted.

In his first paper (*A Whisper of Academic Identity: An HE in FE Perspective)* Feather (2010) confirms earlier reports of high teaching loads for HE in FE teachers, and its affect upon research capacities and developing depth of knowledge needed to teach HE. He reports how teachers "read to teach" (p.195) whereby some HE teaching was "taught from a text book" (ibid.) because of insufficient time to research subjects. Whilst not explicitly linking this with pedagogy, the inference is that teachers were not teaching from a solid platform of in-depth subject knowledge, nor sufficient time to gain it.

Feather's 2011 paper (*Culture of HE in FE – exclave or enclave?)* reinforced earlier findings of Turner et al. (2009b) with regard to switching academic levels. Feather (2011) remarked how many of the teachers had reported how teaching HE in FE was "both stressful and complex, especially if the lecturer had a mixed timetable. That is, if one lesson was delivered at the FE level, and the next was then at a HE level; they felt that this was a difficult transition to make, and therefore feared the lesson may not provide enough depth" (p.26). In a follow up paper (*Oh to be a scholar – an HE in FE perspective*) Feather (2012b) continued with this theme by quoting a teacher who admitted that HE is FE was "an extension, rightly or wrongly, of A-level, in the fact

that it is [draws word out]... the way it's delivered is very 'FE-style'" (p. 256). How the 'FE-style' manifested itself in terms of actual practice was not expanded upon. However it could be supposed that this could have been in a manner discussed earlier within this chapter (see section 2.1.8).

Feather (2012a) returned to the concern of switching between FE and HE levels (*Do lecturers delivering higher education in further education desire to conduct research?*), suggesting it was a burden that might contribute to HE in FE teachers' decision not to undertake research. His 2013 paper – *Has Cinderella Become so Fragmented That She Can No Longer Identify her Area of Expertise?* – continued with themes regarding heavy teaching loads and described how HE in FE teachers admitted they delivered HE at an FE level due to time constraints (Feather, 2013). Unlike with the *Oh to be a scholar – an HE in FE perspective* paper, where an FE teaching style was acknowledged, here teachers admitted to teaching at a lower FE level for HE courses.

Shifting focus away from teaching loads and teaching styles, Feather's 2014 paper, *Research to improve specialist knowledge: an HE in FE perspective,* explored teacher identity through the lens of research and being a researcher and HE teacher. Reprising earlier themes, lack of time and a lack of institutional support to facilitate such endeavours were reported as being the primary reason for not pursuing research. Whilst HE in FE teachers agreed updating subject knowledge was important, research (in its broadest sense) was not deemed to be a priority; either for them in a time poor setting, or for their managers within the college.

Finally, in *Time! What's that? You're joking, I don't have any!,* Feather (2016b) returned to earlier notions of lack of time and commented how this was of particular concern to those teaching HE in FE. Resulting in lecturers being a page ahead of students, Feather inferred that this has consequences for the kind of pedagogy HE in

FE teachers are able to use. In summary, the experience of HE in FE teachers reported in the literature is one of challenge in a time poor, stressful environment where teaching is prioritised over engaging in research or regular, HE orientated scholarly activity. As Wilson and Wilson (2011) argue, “managerial repression” (p.475) effectively undermines and stymies HE in FE teachers being able to develop research skills and capabilities, something which essentially restricts their development as an HE teacher in an FEC.

With regard to the HE identity and experience of HE in FE students, the literature broadly reflects notions of students being “in the middle, sometimes appearing to be confused about their identity” (Parry et al., 2012, p.18). The student experience is characterised as being highly supported, but one that plays out against a backdrop of some students considering HE in FE as being low status when compared to university HE. In contrast King et al. (2013) suggest the HE in FE student experience is broadly positive, citing how higher contact hours enhanced the overall experience. This was framed within college HE being perceived as offering a value for money HE student experience. However, their findings did suggest that HE in FE students (particularly full-time students) did not enjoy the shared FE campus environment, especially with regard to shared library and study resources. With regard to issues of status for foundation degree students, Robinson (2012) suggested that for some, HE in FE offered opportunities for an expansive learning experience. In contrast, she further reported how some students considered their HE to have a “stigma” (p.463) associated with it, by virtue of an FD being of less value, “particularly if undertaken at a college” (ibid.). For some students an FD from an FEC was viewed as being “second-best” (ibid., p.460), a perception which had implications for the ways in which students sense of being an HE student, and how their HE identity was formed. More recently, literature has shifted to explore how colleges align with their students, and to further explore how HE in an FEC can present challenges to providing a good

student experience. In contrast to literature regarding the supportive nature of HE in FE, McTaggart (2016) suggests the experience of some HE in FE students is hampered by the FEC and its lack of awareness of the needs of HE in FE students. Poor course organisation, a lack of appropriately aligned tutor support and a lack of student awareness of other college support available to them presented barriers to their learning and created an arguably poor, less transformatory student experience. In summary, student identity and experience literature has, and continues to illustrate a mixed view, but a view increasingly aligned to the role of the FE college in terms of facilitating (or not) the development of a strong and positive HE student identity.

2.1.18 HE in FE students and transitions

An extension of the broad discussion of student identity and experience, literature concerning how HE in FE students transition between academic levels has explored how studying HE in an FEC (at Foundation Degree level) prepares students who then go to a university for a final year (Level 6) 'top up' to gain a full degree. Greenbank (2007) produced a peer-reviewed paper discussing business final year top-up students and their transition from an FE college Foundation Degree to the final year at a Post 92 university. Whilst not directly concerned with HE in FE pedagogy, the paper included focus group data from top-up students. Within the paper and with reference to the challenges students faced when moving to the university from an FEC, Greenbank (2007) argues how the "the nature of FE appears to promote a culture of support" (p.94). He commented how the college Foundation Degree course leader admitted that whilst they encouraged the students "to get out and do research and various other activities" at the college, there were constraints on the extent to which they could do this because "there's an expectation [from management] that you will be in the classroom". The tutor further admitted how the FE college teaching approach was akin to "spoon feeding" (p.95) and voiced concerns regarding the ability of the students to manage their learning away from the

highly supported college environment. Given the perceived stark cultural differences in approach, Greenbank (2007) concluded by remarking how there could be "question marks over the ability of FEC lecturers to deliver a more complex curriculum" (p.97). What these 'question marks' are is not disclosed. However, considered in concert with the comments regarding the highly supported, managed and 'spoon fed' approach at the FE college, the paper suggests the previously raised misgivings in the literature regarding the challenges of delivering HE in FE, were still a concern. The perceived requirement to be in the classroom links with earlier discussions regarding the surveillience culture that is prominent within FECs. Later research by Pike and Harrison (2011) continues to report how HE in FE students can struggle to adapt to new teaching approaches and to studying in environments where less individual support is provided.

2.1.19 'HEness' and HE culture

As described earlier, one of the recurring themes within the literature concerns that of the perceived lack of an HE culture in an FEC, and how this can impact upon the ways in which HE teaching and learning is conceived and enacted. Concerns about HE culture, or 'HEness' began to appear in the literature following growing concerns about the student experience and how modelling HE along FE lines rendered the HE in FE experience for some students and teachers, as "not quite higher education" (Fenge 2011, p.375).

Arguably the first serious exploration of a higher education ethos was presented by Jones (2006a). *A Higher Education Ethos – A review of information and literature relating to the creation of an ethos of HE in the context of FE* provided a four section literature review addressing: The learning and teaching dimension of an HE Ethos; The symbolic aspects of an HE ethos; The physical, infrastructural aspects of an HE ethos and Student engagement and the HE ethos. Within the 'Learning and teaching dimension of an HE Ethos' section broad references are made to pedagogy, but not

now to enact or guide HE in FE teachers into developing HE pedagogic practices. The review recommends that HE in FE provision needs to be differentiated "from that pitched at the further level" (p.1), with differentiation focusing upon "independent learning, and the need for HE in FE students to move beyond the comparatively more directed forms of learning that can be understood to characterize study at the further level" (p.2). The paper reviews notions of surface and deep learning and postulates how surface approaches may suit FE courses, whereas HE needs to "foster deeper styles" (p.4). The inference being that HE may well be being taught in a more surface style akin to FE. However no evidence is presented to support this. The paper does chime with earlier findings regarding congested timetables and difficulties in switching between FE and HE levels. The paper continues by asserting how "flitting between suitable pedagogies in such tight turning circles is no mean feat. For these and related reasons, practices entailed in creating the deep learning styles that constitute an important part of the HE ethos may prove hard to embed in the contemporary context of HE in FE" (p.4).

Following Jones (2006a), the publication of a peer-reviewed article by Lea and Simmons (2012), *Higher education in further education: capturing and promoting HEness,* put the issue of 'HEness' into the spotlight. Lea and Simmons argued that autonomy, deep learning and criticality were hallmarks of HE. Whilst not based on any field research Lea and Simmons averred how HE in FE needed a pedagogy with "an orientation to learning and teaching centred not just on what we know now, but who benefits from that; how that might be proven wrong; and how to think about what might come in the future" (p.185). Whilst the paper does not articulate how this might be enacted, it signalled a continued interest in HE in FE and the idea of an HE culture and its relationship to HE learning and teaching. Since then the interest in HEness has continued, increasingly with regard to connections between an HE culture and a culture of scholarship within HE in FE. This connection was

emphasised by Simmons and Lea (2013) in their QAA *Capturing an HE ethos in college higher education* practice report, where they suggested concerns had been raised with regard to "the need to develop an HE ethos, and the need to develop a culture of research and scholarship" (p.1). They argued that **'**being higher and scholarly' was essential for HE in FE. Whilst aware of the particular demands and constraints an FEC might place upon developing an HE culture, the report was clear that it was essential to ensure a quality HE experience was provided.

Recent literature by Husband and Jeffrey (2016) suggests by recognising "cultural and practical differences between FE and HE, it is possible and reasonable to accept that creating 'HEness' in FE is problematic" (p.68). This view is echoed by Feather (2016b). Drawing on the prevailing FEC culture of performativity and managerialism, he suggests HE and FE emanate from different roots, thereby making instilling 'HEness' and developing HE students as scholars a very difficult task. Notions of distinctly separate cultural heritages and traditions between FE and HE are also proposed by Colley et al. (2014). Finally, Springbett (2017) argues that embedding HEness continues to present challenges, suggesting how the culture and discourse in FECs can still be viewed as being resistant to notions of HEness.

2.1.20 Scholarly activity and research

As described earlier, the interest in 'HEness' has coincided with that of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and of scholarly activity and research. Interest in these in HE in FE reflects the broader HE sector, whereby *inter alia*, the introduction of the UKPSF, concerns about poor teaching and the status of teaching, e.g. the introduction of the TEF, and a repositioning of the student as a partner and as a co-producer of knowledge, have elevated the profile of teaching (SoTL) (Eaton, 2015). Further, there has been greater emphasis on scholarly activity and upon HE teachers engaging in it as part of their on-going professional development (Hills and Meakin, 2016). This interest coincides with edicts from the QAA (2013) which require "all

teaching staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes [to] have relevant knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching" (p 2). Further external drivers to develop scholarly activity and to promote SoTL relate to the requirements placed upon colleges to evidence this if they are to attain FDAP (as described previously) (Eaton, 2015), and attend to the perceived policy deficit regarding HE in FE teachers and the ways in which they are trained and developed (Skills Commission, 2010).

Prior to these more recent developments, scholarly activity in HE in FE did not get specific, focused attention in the literature until 2006. The publication of *Scholarly Activity in the context of HE in FE* (Jones, 2006b) was written in response to the "the current and growing interest in scholarly activity [that] has been influenced by concerns to enhance learning and teaching, both at the national policy level, and within colleges" (p.1). Not about pedagogy and teaching approaches *per se* and not derived from empirical data, it mentioned definitions of scholarly activity and provided a treatise of how scholarly activity can inform teaching. The review does contend how "insufficient attention is paid to the distinction between disciplinary specific knowledge and knowledge relating to pedagogy" (p.4), but does not explore what pedagogy knowledge might be needed for HE. The review concludes with recommendations for enhancing scholarly activity in HE in FE including HEIs providing courses to enable HE in FE teachers the opportunity to "develop pedagogic skills" (p.10) as a means of enhancing HE in FE. What these pedagogic skills are is unknown but it implies that different pedagogic skills are needed to teach HE. Whilst being somewhat ambiguous, it supports the view from the literature that different pedagogic approaches were needed for HE in FE.

Since Jones (2006b), the re-designation of HE students as being researchers has established itself across the HE sector. As stated by Healey and Jenkins (2009), "*All*

undergraduate students in *all* higher education institutions should experience learning through, and about, research and inquiry" (p. 3). Following Healey and Jenkins, an HEA commissioned study to explore scholarship and research in HE in FE was published by Healey et al. in 2014. Framed within notions of scholarship espoused by Ernest Boyer, *Developing research-based curricula in college-based higher education* reinforces the HE sector discourse regarding the need for HE teachers to be engaged in scholarly activity, and for SoTL to be a key feature of HE in FE. Further, they argue how scholarship "underpins the very essence of higher education" (p.9) and can aid colleges in developing an HE culture. This view is arguably understood by the HE sector as a whole, yet not all in HE in FE are convinced by it. King et al. (2014a) argue that for colleges with limited HE provision, it is not always easy to justify making provision for the engagement in scholarship and scholarly activity for HE teachers. In their non-peer-reviewed scholarly activity report commissioned by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) (n= 60 FECs), King et al. reported how HE in FE teachers alluded to the challenges of convincing management to support HE teacher scholarly activity due to the "impact of scholarly activity on TLA is often very weak, which undermines the case for it" (p.37). A further publication by King et al. (2014b) suggested how **"**many teaching staff do not feel confident about undertaking scholarly activity" (p.5). Arguably, such views correlate with findings of Feather (2016b) and of Springbett (2017) who suggest some FECs are resistant to accepting HE practices and cultures as being essential to HE in FE.

The Healey et al. (2014) report suggests conceptions of scholarship amongst HE in FE teachers, managers and students are varied, but the paper is important in signifying the relative importance of being scholarly within HE in FE. It also acted a pre-cursor for the current AoC project as a vehicle for promoting and enhancing HE in FE scholarship through SoTL. The AoC Scholarship Project is funded by the

HEFCE Catalyst Fund (June 2015 – June 2018) and is managed by the AoC (Lea, 2011; Lea and Simmons, 2012; Simmons and Lea, 2013; Healey et al., 2014). Supported by the NUS, the QAA and the HEA, it involves 46 English FECs and was commissioned in response to the challenges faced by colleges to provide HE "within its wider further and adult continuing education context, combined with some concerns about the scholarly and research capabilities of its teaching staff" (AoC, 2015, p.1). Based around notions of scholarship espoused by Boyer (1990) the project aims to develop toolkits to support colleges to integrate distinctive forms of scholarship and to emphasise the role of students as partners and co-producers of knowledge.

One of the key outputs is to design a College Higher Education (HE) Scholarship Framework to create amongst a "clearly-articulated technical education pedagogy, informed by prior research and incorporating the principles of co-creation and co-inquiry" (ibid.). Further, the research aims to "explore ways in which curricula and pedagogies might explicitly and effectively integrate life and work experience with academic studies (the scholarship of integration)" (p.2). With reference to technical and work experience, the pedagogy has a particular orientation. Early case study outputs from participating colleges from the First and Second Research and Scholarship in College Higher Education Conferences do not include any papers or posters that explicitly discuss pedagogic practices in the classroom. Until the conclusion of the project in June 2018, the technical education pedagogy will not be known. However, its importance as a research project specifically devoted to HE in colleges should not be underestimated.

2.1.21 Pedagogy

The final theme of the literature concerns those specifically orientated towards HE in FE pedagogy. For this theme I included literature that specifically featured pedagogy

(and teacher practice) within HE in FE. Whereas other literature alluded to pedagogy or mentioned it as a peripheral aspect (including SoTL which, by implication includes pedagogy but not necessarily at a practice level), the literature within this theme had pedagogy and teacher practice at its core. What was evident was the paucity of research; particularly empirical studies and peer reviewed studies. Despite the number of students studying HE in an FE college, only six key empirical papers specifically concerned with HE in FE pedagogy and teacher practice were found.

2.1.22 Key publications

NB. * denotes peer reviewed

1. Young (2002) *Scholarship is the word that dare not speak its name: Lecturers' Experiences of Teaching on a Higher Education Programme in a Further Education College* *
2. Harwood and Harwood (2004) *Higher education in further education: delivering higher education in a further education context—a study of five South West colleges* *
3. Burkhill et al. (2008) *Lecturing in higher education in further education settings* *
4. King and Greenwood (2010) *Strategic Options, Operational Challenges: A study of Higher Education delivered in a Further Education setting*
5. Gale et al. (2011) *Communities of praxis? Scholarship and practice styles of the HE in FE professional* *
6. King and Widdowson (2012) *Inspiring Individuals: teaching higher education in a further education college. Exploring the pedagogy of HE delivered in an FE setting*

To contextualise this literature to this study, I have mapped significant literature (Figure 2) across a chronological time frame as a means of visualising it alongside

the key policy landmarks that have been discussed. The following review serves to situate and critique this key literature within this landscape.

2.2 The HE in FE pedagogy literature landscape

As discussed, the 'special mission' granted by Lord Dearing (1997) gave FECs a specific remit to address the HE widening participation (WP) agenda, largely through the provision of work-based Foundation Degrees (FD). This heightened interest in HE in FE coincided with a time in education research when significant funding from *The Teaching and Learning Research Programme* (TLRP) (2000–2011) was available to examine all sub-sectors of UK education. This policy landscape gave HE in FE a new and important remit, and during this time a small number empirical studies were conducted to specifically explore HE in FE from a pedagogic perspective.

Policy/key HE sector publication or event	1997	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Type of study	*The Dearing Report*				*The Foster Report* NSS	*Leitch Review*	*The Lingfield Report* IQER (07–12)		HEFCE require FECs to submit HE strategic plan	*The Browne Review*	*Students at the Heart of the System* white paper FDAP granted to FECs Launch of UKFSF	KIS data published *HER (Higher Education Review*) introduced for FECs and universities	QAA *Quality Code* launched QAA FDAP guidance – *Assuring Pedagogical Effectiveness*		QAA Toolkit *Engaging with the Quality Code*	First FEC TDAP	TEF
Empirical		**Young (2002)***		**Harwood and Harwood (2004) ***				**Burkhill, et al., (2008) *** Bathmaker et al. (2008) ESCR *FurtherHigher Project*	Turner, et al.,(2009a)* Turner, et al.,(2009b)*	**King and Greenwood (2010)** Feather (2010) *	Feather (2011)* **Gale, et al.,(2011)***	Feather (2012a)* Feather (2012b)* **King and Widdowson (2012)** BIS/Parry (2012) *Understanding HE in FECs*	Feather (2013)*	Feather (2014)*		Feather (2016a)* Feather (2016b)*	
Critical commentary and quality reviews												Leahy (2012)* Lea and Simmons (2012)*	Creasy (2013)*	QAA (2014) Year 1 HER analysis	QAA (2015b) Year 2 HER analysis	QAA (2016) Year 3 HER analysis	
Secondary reviews and reports			HEFCE (2003)	LSDA/Parry (2004)		Jones /HEA (2006a& b) x2 literature reviews			HEFCE (2009) *Supporting HE in FECs*		Greenwood (2011) HEA						
SoTL													Simmons and Lea (2013)	Healey et al. (2014)	HEFCE and AoC *Scholar-ship Project* (on-going)		

Figure 2. HE in FE pedagogy literature landscape

6 key publications in yellow bold
*Peer reviewed
Shading in empirical row indicates period when empirical studies were conducted.
Shading in critical commentaries/ quality reviews row indicates period when these publications were written.

Young (2002) produced the first peer-reviewed, empirical study and it continues to be an oft-cited work despite having been written fifteen years previously. Using interviews (the number of participants is not stated) with HE in FE teachers from one English FE college, Young (2002) observed how the teachers reported experiencing "difficulties in relation to swapping between levels" (p.274) when they had a mixed FE and HE teaching load. She commented how the condensed timetabling appeared to exacerbate the issue. Further, she described how all of those interviewed suggested there were "significant differences between teaching HE and FE" (p.278). How these differences manifested themselves or reasons for them was not explored, though it was noted that the teachers had issues with having to adjust "their thinking, and in the way they communicated with their students" (p.278). The paper described how switching academic levels and moving between FE and HE lessons was a "major stress[es] of teaching HE in an FE college". Whilst a small-scale study with a limited methodology and detail of numbers of participants, it did illuminate the potential challenges teaching HE in FE could present.

Another regularly cited peer-reviewed work by Harwood and Harwood (2004) travelled similar terrain as Young (2002). In their exploration of teacher practices, questionnaires (n=83) and telephone interviews (n=34) were used to ascertain "differences in teaching practice and pedagogy between FE and HE teaching and the problems of realizing these in FE learning environments" (Harwood and Harwood, 2004, p.153). The paper revealed, "Ninety-one per cent reported that their pedagogical delivery for HE differed from FE. It was, however, difficult to get a clear picture of any differences from the responses" (p.161). Further, they commented how "strategies used were at best informal and possibly rather vague, although there were some general references to increasing the level of independent learning through HE Levels 1–3. It was not clear how increasing learner autonomy was

achieved" (ibid.). Finally the paper suggested how the majority of respondents acknowledged that "no differences were made between levels of HE" (ibid.), i.e. that the way in which Levels 4, 5 and 6 were taught did not differ. Instead, the study reported a simple FE and HE binary to demarcate between them, arguably considering FE to be an homogenous mass and HE to be an homogenous mass, rather than recognising the increasing levels of sophistication and criticality between Levels 4, 5 and 6 (and indeed Levels 1, 2 and 3 in FE). Arguably, this confirms much of what Young (2002) reported, but does provide the additional dimension of including how HE is differentiated (or not) through the different UG academic levels. At this juncture the literature does not indicate much more than there being a perceived difference in pedagogy between FE and HE, with practice being largely unknown or enacted around ambiguous notions of student 'independence' and 'autonomy'.

The year 2007 marked a change to HE in FE through the introduction of the *Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review* (IQER). Overseen by the QAA, HE in FE was subject to a review of academic standards, the quality of learning opportunities, and public information (QAA, 2008). A process including self-assessment and peer review, evidence to demonstrate capability and quality in HE teaching typically came from documents pertaining to student feedback or peer observations. Despite including scholarship, staff development and staff qualifications in the review, pedagogy and specifics regarding how HE teachers teach HE in an FEC were not part of the process. The prevailing QAA review culture was geared towards assuring quality and enhancement. As such, FECs were compelled to meet these criteria, something that perhaps contributed to the dearth of empirical studies concerning pedagogy.

Against this policy landscape, Burkill et al. (2008) published a peer-reviewed paper to explore HE in FE teacher beliefs and the notion of the existence of distinctive approaches regarding the use of 'the lecture' in HE in FE contexts. The paper particularly focused upon the use of the lecture in FE colleges versus the university sector. Using an online questionnaire including a modified form of questions from the quantitative *Approaches to Teaching Inventory* (ATI) (Prosser and Trigwell, 1997), 106 respondents provided data from 17 FE colleges in the south west of England. Unlike Young (2002) and Harwood and Harwood (2004) who used interviews, a study of pedagogy using a quantitative questionnaire arguably has some serious drawbacks. Without contextualising the questions and gaining and understanding with participants about what terms such as Information transfer/ Teacher-focused and Conceptual Change/ Student-focused mean, I argue that caution over the findings should be urged. Whilst the study was able to identity broad trends, it was not able to illustrate *why* HE teachers might assume particular positions, thereby limiting its value.

Burkhill et al. (2008) prefaced their research by commenting how literature and publications concerning HE in FE scarcely mentioned "classroom practices of teachers" (p.321). They observed that HE in FE students "are taught in a different culture from most traditional university students and it is often assumed that teachers use approaches that are different from those used in universities" (ibid.), the inference being that there are different approaches between HE in a university and HE in an FEC. They classify FE teaching according to its smaller class sizes, the inclusion of widening participation groups and the assessment of specific knowledge in "bite-sized chunks" (p.323). They further suggest how this pedagogic approach is carried over from their FE work and is used for their HE students because they assume that HE in FE students "require highly supportive methods of delivery in small groups with strong tutorial and pastoral systems" (p.323). They contend how

the FE context has the potential to “influence lecturing approaches in HE in FE include the teaching background of those who work simultaneously with HE and FE students” (p.322). How this influence might manifest itself was not explored beyond this comment. Their findings suggested how HE in FE teachers were “typically student focused rather than teacher focused in their beliefs” (p.324), but definitions of ‘student focused’ or how this translated into actual pedagogic practice were not articulated. They commented that (arguably in contradiction to claims of being ‘student focused’) “knowledge transmission emerges as an established feature of teaching practice” (p.329) for HE in FE teachers. What this meant in terms of the nature of teaching practices is not explored. Whilst the research is a useful addition to the literature in terms of including HE in FE teacher participant data, arguably too many ambiguities persist for it to be said to provide insights into actual pedagogic practices of HE in FE teachers. However, it is useful in reinforcing earlier works concerning the small group and highly supported FE teaching environment and its potential dissonance with teaching HE.

Following Burkhill et al. (2008), King and Greenwood (2010) co-authored a non-peer-reviewed HE in FE sector report commissioned by The Mixed Economy Group (MEG). Principals and Directors of HE from 66 FE colleges participated in telephone/face-to-face interviews, 3000 HE in FE teachers and 800 students were surveyed online. Respondents were asked whether they thought there was a difference in the teaching delivered in an FEC compared to an HEI and in what way this differed. King and Greenwood (2010) concluded “teaching of HE requires a different approach and a different skill set… [Tutors] need to ensure that staff are able to adapt their teaching skills to the style required in HE” (p.47). They further suggested, “the development of applied skills requires different teaching styles compared to those of a traditional academic degree” (ibid.). This reinforces earlier works regarding FE and HE needing different approaches. In common with these,

the report does not describe what these styles are. With reference to HE in FE the report claims that the “quality of teaching is better – staff have to be qualified and are often more motivational in their style as a result of being trained and being used to delivering FE” (ibid.). Arguably, with no teaching observations carried out either in a college or in a university as part of the methodology, it is questionable as to how far this claim can be substantiated. Whilst empirical and including respondents in the thousands, there are concerns with bias. The report was commissioned by the MEG group. As a leading organisation bound to protect the interests of the 41 FECs it represents and with one co-author (King) being a MEG officer (at the time of the report), it is questionable as to how far claims (such as they are) can be taken. Despite the large numbers of participants, the outcomes of the report are, perhaps not unsurprisingly, little more than ‘good news stories’ championing HE in FE. As with the previous literature, there is little compelling evidence to support findings.

HE in FE continued to expand, with 2011 seeing the first UK FECs to be awarded FDAP. Blurring the boundaries between colleges and universities, the *UK Professional Standards Framework* (UKPSF) was launched to begin to address apparent deficits in teaching and learning across the HE sector.

During 2011, Gale et al., (2011) published a peer-reviewed article that included data from 12 interviews with HE in FE teachers from four FE colleges during 2007/2008. Questions regarding HE teaching ‘practice style’ reported how teachers believed that the institutional culture of the FE college failed both to recognise “HE practice styles” and “constrained the development” of adopting such an approach (p.164). Teachers explained that no HE-orientated training was provided to support development. However, what an HE practice style looked like was not described. Rather, teachers considered themselves as “generalists in terms of the broad subject knowledge required for their teaching, but that they were also generalists in the requirements of

their teaching practices" (p.163). Whilst not explicit, the inference is that a general, i.e. similar pedagogic approach, was adopted across FE and HE. This was another small-scale study, but one that alluded to the FE environment in some way impacting upon the ways in which HE teachers taught.

The final key item of literature reviewed was by King and Widdowson (2012) from the MEG group. An HEA-funded (non-peer-reviewed) report specifically concerned HE in FE pedagogy and sought to test the hypothesis that a "different style of teaching and learning exists within the HE in FE sector" (p.4). Data from 559 staff from 30 colleges was gathered via an online questionnaire where respondents were asked to tick the teaching methods they used, without being asked why or how they used these methods. They were then asked to select from a list of predetermined characteristics of an HE in FE pedagogy. These were: Inductive reasoning (e.g. generalisations based on individual instances); Deductive reasoning (e.g. conclusion necessarily follows from a set of premises or hypotheses); Inductive to deductive shift over course duration; Practical vocational relevance and experience; Restricted group size; Emphasis primarily on direct contact with some directed study; Direct contact to directed contact shift over course duration.

Their findings reported "a high proportion of teachers stated that their chosen methodologies shifted over the duration of the course from inductive to deductive approaches, which in turn suggests changes in methodology to reflect greater development of student-centred and independent learning" (p.11). Arguably, deductive teaching models are more associated with teacher-centeredness whilst inductive models are more aligned with student-centeredness (Nath and Cohen, 2010). Further, King and Widdowson (2012) stated how their findings suggested how "reliance on more formal techniques (and occasional references to "spoon feeding" facts) is not at the expense of more formative methods" (p.11).

Given no discussions or observations took place with any of the respondents, assertions such as these can only be based upon supposition given the lack of evidence. The apparent endorsement of 'occasional spoon feeding', as a pedagogic approach for HE is arguably something of a concern. The report concludes by stating that "there is no evidence to suggest that a distinctive pedagogy is emerging within HE in FE, however: rather, the good practice found in FE is continued into higher-level study. Staff know their students and are able to motivate them to levels of retention and success that stand comparison with the best universities" (p.14). These are bold claims and not ones that can be convincing evidenced from the methodologically limited data set.

Having discussed the six key literature items some interesting patterns are revealed. The number of empirical studies waned during the mid 2000s, whilst literature critical of HE in FE began to emerge. As discussed earlier, Leahy (2012), Lea and Simmons (2012) and Creasy (2013) all questioned the ability of FECs to effectively deliver HE. Lea and Simmons (2012) commented that HE in FE needed a pedagogy with "an orientation to learning and teaching centred not just on what we know now, but who benefits from that; how that might be proven wrong; and how to think about what might come in the future" (p.185). In contrast, Creasy (2013) suggested "HE staff within FECs do not necessarily engage with HE teaching practices" (p.49), whilst Leahy (2012) described pedagogic practices including "spoon feeding and inflating results" (p.179).

Concern appeared to be borne out by successive poor judgments pronounced by the QAA. In the 2013/14 Higher Education Review (HER) analysis, the QAA reported 31 per cent of FECs were awarded an unsatisfactory judgment in at least one area (QAA, 2014a). The 2014/15 HER analysis reported a slight improvement, with 27 per cent of colleges receiving an unsatisfactory judgement (QAA, 2015), whilst the

2015/16 HER reported FEC performance as ‘mixed’, with 30 per cent getting an unsatisfactory judgment in at least one area (QAA, 2016). Despite increasing numbers of colleges gaining FDAP and in spite of the launch of the QAA *Quality Code* (2012) and the UKPSF, a significant number of colleges were not meeting expectations. Interestingly, the QAA reports highlighted how colleges with fewer 250 HE students appeared to be more likely to get an unsatisfactory judgment.

Whilst criticism was voiced from the QAA, a change in research direction began to take place. As discussed, with student demands for ‘value for money’ and on-going concerns over teaching quality in HE, the interest in SoTL has emerged in the HE sector. As empirical HE in FE studies diminished, the discourse relating to HE in FE has slowly been evolving towards SoTL (see Healey et al., 2014; AoC Scholarship Project, 2015). As Wood and Cajkler (2017) remark, SoTL is rising on the agenda for all HE providers, suggesting how it has “developed conceptually, and continues to offer a fertile focus for debate concerning the place of teaching within the academy and how best to develop better, more critical pedagogic practice” (p.1). Given the increasingly marketized and competitive HE sector there is increased emphasis on notions of teaching quality and of value for money in HE. Similarly more colleges are seeking to gain FDAP and Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) as a means of securing longer-term HE futures without the financial fetters associated with having a validating university partner. King et al. (2014a) attribute regulatory changes to college HE, i.e. being reviewed in the same way as universities, as being a factor contributing to the increased impetus for colleges to look to adopt more scholarly practices. Despite the rhetoric, the literature has illustrated that much of what is deemed to be SoTL often fails to go beyond broad statements about college HE teachers ‘attending conferences’ or doing ‘action research’. What this review also indicates is the dearth of literature, which explicitly explores HE pedagogy in FE settings, i.e. actual classroom practices and the rationale for their use. This yawning

gap is recognised by Greenwood (2011), who comments that, “whilst there is research on the distinctive differences between HE in FE, and HE in HEIs, there is relatively little looking at whether there is a distinctive pedagogy associated with this” (p.1).

Summary

What this HE in FE literature review has revealed are broad themes which point towards HE in FE attracting predominantly WP, non-traditional students to study foundation degree programmes within the relative support and small group environment that FECs provide. This can be viewed as offering value for money HE for local students. However, the literature increasingly suggests that the WP discourse of inclusivity and social mobility can portray HE in FE students as vulnerable, and as being less well equipped to negotiate transitions to university HE when moving to Level 6. It also suggests the WP agenda within HE in FE can sustain inequalities, rather than challenge and change them.

The nature of the literature has shifted from that of guidance to colleges, to more of critique, as evidence and feedback from stakeholders becomes available through research and data collection inititives. Literature regarding those teaching HE in FE maintains a consistent reporting of high teaching hours and having to negotiate a multi-level teaching timetable within an FE culture dominated by managerialism. Within this, how HE teaching actually plays out in the classroom is often inferred, but is not definitively supported by substantial emperical evidence.

The tone of the discourse regarding HE in FE has also begun to shift. In part from more research into HE in FE, and in part from sector-wide discourse within HE, e.g. student experience, students as researchers etc., there is increasingly a sense that whilst some HE in FE is undoubtedly high quality (as evidenced by a number of

FECs being awarded FDAP and DAP), some colleges are not necessarily achieving the levels demanded by the HE sector and those who assure its quality. Criticisms broadly concern 'HEness' and notions of scholarship. As part of this, some literature suggests resistance issues in some colleges are an on-going concern.

2.3 Conclusion

What this review has illustrated is how the current HE in FE literature corpus is pauce and under-theorised. What is known about is HE in FE pedagogy literature can be summed up thus:

- There is an absence of literature that clearly articulates or theorises HE in FE teacher pedagogic practice
- There are very few micro, classroom level empirical, practice based studies about the pedagogic practices enacted by HE teachers in an FEC
- Since 2012, no specific HE in FE pedagogy empirical studies have been conducted
- Peer-reviewed empirical studies were conducted between 2002 and 2011, which raises questions about currency and resonance
- Studies have been small scale and methodologically limited
- No GT and/or PT studies have been conducted
- No studies with a sustained period of researcher presence in the research site and/or the use of multiple (or indeed any) observations have been conducted
- Current HE in FE research (in line with the overall HE sector) is focusing on SoTL, rather than specifically exploring micro classroom pedagogic practices.

Undertaking this review increased my sensitivity and endowed me with 'points of departure' to inform the methodology and subsequent conversations with

participants. These include the inability to articulate how HE teaching styles should be different to FE teaching styles, teaching load, swapping between academic level, the influence of the FE environment on HE, and HE-specific teaching training/CPD.

The literature indicates a general acceptance of the premise that FE and HE are different, thereby requiring HE to be taught in a different way to FE. The evidence from the literature did not suggest the presence of a distinct HE in FE pedagogy.

How practices actually manifest themselves in classes has been subject to limited exploration. Criticisms concerning a surface approach to teaching HE with 'spoon feeding' are reported (see Greenbank, 2007; Bathmaker et al., 2008; Parry et al., 2012; Leahy, 2012; King and Widdowson, 2012). Further, the impact of the FE college culture results in some accusations of colleges not being compatible with the scholarly ideals of HE (see Husband and Jeffrey, 2016; Feather, 2016b; Springbett, 2017).

The move towards embracing more scholarship in HE in FE recognises the criticisms that have been levelled at HE in FE (AoC, 2015). That said, the conception of scholarship is broad and whilst it does include notions of pedagogy and the need for students to develop independence and autonomy, this is not explicitly emphasised. Assertions about what pedagogic practices HE teachers enact in FE settings are inferential and at best, vague. Questions regarding *what* pedagogic practices teachers enact and *why* remain unanswered, and this study will contribute towards filling the gap in this neglected HE sector.

It is important to emphasise that the shape of this study was not constrained by this initial review, as this study was exploratory and inductive in nature, and responded to participant insights as they emerged. The initial review served rather as a starting point and a signpost to the general direction of the study. It gave me an overall view

of the geography of the HE in FE landscape, and appreciation of current concerns and discourses in the field of enquiry, whilst enabling me to remain open to constructing new theoretical insights based on data grounded in the field (Urquhart, 2007).

Chapter 3: Pilot Study – Philosophical Turns and Re-orientations

3.0 Introduction

Part of the doctoral journey included undertaking a pilot study prior to the main study at Shireland College. This coincided with writing up and presenting my pilot findings during my MPhil to PhD transfer. The report and seminar (presented 31 October, 2013) formed a critical aspect of my doctoral journey; both theoretically and personally. The current chapter outlines a critique of the pilot study described within the transfer report. Crucially, it details the methodological changes made post-pilot, and the rationale for change. It also describes my moments of, "confusion and uncertainty… and the complex ambiguity of the research journey" (Finlay, 2009 p.13). Inextricably tied up with the methodological changes are deep-seated, philosophical re-orientations, ontological, epistemological and paradigmic acknowledgements and ensuing transformations, all of which evolved in me as a result of my journey towards being and becoming a doctoral researcher. Experienced personally as something of an epiphany; a "learning moment or 'leap'" (Wisker et al., 2010, p.21), this chapter describes the nature of the epiphany and its impact upon my philosophical stance and ensuing methodological and theoretical approaches for the rest of the study.

3.1 Ontology, epistemology and paradigms

At the beginning of my doctoral journey my conceptions of ontology, epistemology and paradigms were largely absent, with absence resulting from ignorance and a lack of awareness. Through the doctoral journey (particularly at the time of the pilot phase), I came to understand that ontology and epistemology are never absent, only that I had hitherto been unacquainted with them. As part of this process of acquaintance, the connection between them and my paradigmic, methodological and analytical considerations underwent significant development and change.

Crotty (1998) defines ontology as “the study of being” (p. 10) and epistemology as “a way of understanding and explaining how I know what I know” (p. 3). More simply, the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, knowledge creation, what counts as knowledge, and notions regarding what can be known. As part of this, ontology and epistemology are considered as being inextricably linked, with profound implications for how researchers approach and conduct their research (Moon and Blackman, 2014).

Broadly, ontology can be characterised as being realist or relativist. Realism postulates the “real world [is] out there and exists independently from us. The world is made up of objects and structures that have identifiable cause and effect relationships” (King and Horrocks, 2010, p.9). In contrast, relativism contends there is no reality ‘out there’. Rather, it is in the minds of individuals who construct reality on the basis of their own experiences in given spaces and at given times (Moon and Blackman, 2014).

Epistemology can be broadly summarised as being objectivist or subjectivist (von Glasersfeld, 1995), conceptions which sit at either end of a continuum of epistemological loci, a continuum which accounts for varyingly different epistemological positions (Rorty, 1991). An objectivist position separates knowledge from the knower, with knowledge being absolute and knowable by virtue of an ‘out there’, external reality. As Pratt (1998) suggests, an objectivist epistemology posits “people can rationally come to know the world as it really is; the facts of the world are essentially there for study” (p.23).

In contrast, subjectivism rejects the separation of knowledge from the knower. Instead, what is known is linked to individuals and their experiences and interpretations, rather than upon an ‘out there’, preexisting external reality. As such, a subjectivist (alternatively a constructionist/constructivist) epistemology “develops a

theory of knowledge in which knowledge does not reflect an objective, ontological reality but exclusively an ordering and organization of a world constituted by our experience" (von Glasersfeld, 1984, p.24). There is no notion of the existence of an absolute 'truth' merely awaiting discovery. Rather 'truth' is manifested as 'meaning'. Reflecting a construction in the minds of individuals, this 'meaning' is based upon social and cultural community interactions and is different for everyone (Moon and Blackman, 2014).

Finally, ontological and epistemological positions are related to particular philosophical paradigms. Defined by Chalmers (1982) as being "the general theoretical assumptions and laws, and techniques for their application that the members of a particular scientific community adopt" (p.90), a paradigm assumes particular positions with regard to truth, reality and knowledge, and about which methodological approaches and methods are used to conduct research.

There is some contestation in the literature regarding the nomenclature and number of paradigms. However, paradigms can be broadly categorised as being quantitative and qualitative or as positivist and post-positivist (alternatively post-modernist). Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest four paradigms: Positivism, Post-positivism, Critical Theory and Constructivism. Of these, positivism and post-positivism assume realist ontological and objective epistemological positions. Critical theory also assumes a realist ontological position, but an epistemological position more aligned to subjectivism. Whereas constructivism is aligned to a relativist ontology with a subjectivist epistemology.

At the time of preparing to gather data for the pilot study, my knowledge and understanding of these fundamental philosophical concepts was largely unaccounted for. The design was essentially conceived without any meaningful interrogation of my own philosophical position; ontological, epistemological, methodological and

methodical or methods, despite all being related, had not been fully considered at the pilot stage. The consequences for this lack of consideration are discussed in section 3.2. The following section outlines what methodological approach and methods I used to undertake the pilot study.

3.2 Methods and methodology for the pilot phase

Given my wish to explore the HE pedagogic practices of those teaching both HE and FE equine/animal/veterinary nursing studies within a principally FE landbased college, the pilot study was designed to enable me to do this with two teacher participants using teacher interviews and classroom observations.

There were five research questions:

1. *To explore the teaching practices, beliefs and experiences of Animal/Equine Studies teacher participants who teach both FE and HE within an FE Landbased College environment;*
2. *To explore the extent to which teaching methods and practices are modified and adapted between FE and HE levels;*
3. *To seek to appraise factors that influence both if and how teaching methods and practices are modified between FE and HE level;*
4. *To seek to appraise factors and influences which contribute to why particular methods and practices are adopted;*
5. *To assess impacts and implications of an FE Landbased College environment for teachers delivering HE in FE Animal/Equine Studies courses.*

The pilot phase of data collection took place at a LBC that did not feature as the case study site (Shireland College) in the main study. The inclusion of a pilot was designed in order to add to the strength of the overall methodological process, giving me, a novice qualitative researcher, opportunities to use interview and other

techniques (Holloway, 1997). It also enabled me to gather background information about teacher views as a means of helping to shape further research questions (Sampson, 2004).

In order to answer the research questions, the following methods were employed:

1. Biographical and teaching attitudes questionnaire prior to the data collection phase;
2. Teaching observations of an FE class and an HE class (the same one) over a three-week period;
3. Teacher interviews after the period of classroom observation (one-to-one interview lasting around 75 minutes per participant) ;
4. After the final observation, the teacher participants completed the quantitative *Approaches to Teaching Inventory* (ATI) (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999);
5. One-to-one interview with the college HE Manager (75 minutes);
6. Data interpreted using thematic analysis.

Findings were written up and presented at my transfer seminar. Feedback provided by University of Bedfordshire reviewers included criticism of my definition of pedagogy and of my approach to reflexivity.

3.3 Reflecting upon pilot methods and methodology – the role of philosophy

Whilst at the time I was broadly satisfied that the methodological ideas formed a largely coherent assemblage of methods, deeper and wider immersion into the realms of research methodology and philosophy illuminated me as to how little the design rationale was informed by thinking much beyond the superficial. As suggested by Niemimaa (2014), “Research and philosophy are closely related… Assumptions embedded in any philosophical worldview render certain parts of a studied

phenomenon more salient than others, and, consequently, they also embed certain blind spots" (p.3).

Whilst the MPhil/PhD transfer report talked of a research stance aligned to a constructivist/interpretivist paradigm, using a qualitative, naturalistic methodology to enable me "to understand phenomena in context-specific settings" (Hoepfl, 1997, p.47), to describe in order to understand, rather than to predict and test, I realise that this was written from a simplistic, and unenlightened viewpoint.

Denzin (1989a) asserts that interpretive research, "begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (p.12). The acknowledgement that, as the researcher, my voice will always be present (Orne and Bell, 2015), and the need for qualitative researchers to be aware both of, "ideological positioning and also of the way which this has influenced the research study" (Mantzoukas, 2005, p.283), was poorly understood, nor was its significance given sufficient attention by myself. Moreover, it arrived from following (sometimes instinctively) a methodological orthodoxy found within qualitative research methods textbooks, and, with the inclusion of the quantitative *Approaches to Teaching Inventory* (ATI) (Prosser and Trigwell, 1999), was an acknowledgement of my scientific heritage.

In truth, given my background as a life sciences teacher my personal worldview, my "basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p.17) at the beginning of this PhD study was orientated towards one of positivism. Mantzoukas (2005) defines positivism as being

> A belief that if the researcher follows the methodological canons laid out by this paradigm s/he can explicitly separate his/her biases from objective facts and eventually acquire a 'God's eye view' on the phenomena under study that would lead to the revelation of the objective truth about them. (p.282)

Believing truth to be a 'given', and being familiar, and comfortable with experiments and controlled trials (Brundrett and Rhodes, 2014), along with ideas that social

observations can be dealt with objectively and in a manner akin to the way that physical phenomena are treated by scientists (Tuli, 2010), did influence the pilot methodology design and my approach to collecting and interpreting pilot data.

My academic background from early schooling and more latterly as a teacher of the sciences, coupled with the dominance of positivism over the last four centuries in western philosophy (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007), perhaps inevitably led me to holding positivist, objectivist assumptions. Facts and a belief in science to provide the answers was inculcated in me from an early age. As a result I did approach the pilot (and select methods) to enable me to objectively determine cause and effect using a scientific method. My epistemological position ensured that what counted as important, valuable knowledge was objective, scientific reporting of facts in an unbiased and unprejudiced way (Crotty, 1998). These notions overrode any consideration of human aspects of agency and values (Bracken, 2010). This was my starting premise. I took reality to be 'out there' and the same for everyone, and I framed my thinking and action with words such as reliability, validity, objectivity*;* effectively the language of positivism.

Like many researchers with positivist affiliations, to some extent, I did indulge (albeit whilst keeping my positivism largely to myself) in what Sampson (2004) refers to as "criticisms of subjectivity" (p.385) of qualitative work. As suggested by Phillimore and Goodson (2004), I was sceptical about the rigour of qualitative research, and did consider its "oversimplified view" (p.4) to be a "poor alternative" (ibid.) to scientific research (p.4). I was plagued by nagging doubts about validity and sample size and of my research ever being able to 'prove' anything; about it being nothing more than an anecdotal account.

3.4 Reflecting upon pilot methods and methodology – moments of clarity and developing reflexivity

During and after the pilot phase, deep reflection lead to the realisation that despite my claim for a research stance aligned to the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm I was approaching the research from a positivist perspective, and with an incompatible set of research criteria. I was dealing in the currency of positivism and using the "tools of an essentially positivist epistemology" by allying myself to reliability and validity (Winter, 2000, n.p.), rather than interpretivist criteria of, trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). I was still struggling to reconcile interpretivism with the idea of only being able to achieve objectivity and the truth through employing a detached, scientific approach to inquiry (Klenke, 2008).

3.5 Doctoral transformation of personal ontological and epistemological positioning

During the pilot phase I underwent profound change as I wrestled with these ontological, epistemic and paradigmic dilemmas. Wisker et al. (2010) suggest that doctoral students do go through "ontological shifts – security of self is challenged and researcher identities affected; epistemological shifts – knowledge is problematised and deepened" (p.6). This view is echoed by Keefer (2015) who maintains that ontological and epistemological re-positioning takes place during the doctoral journey, signalling how "the novice researcher recognises (s)he is no longer the same person who entered their programme, a threshold is crossed and one's identity has shifted" (p.18). This statement certainly resonated with me. My ontological and epistemological re-focussing away from positivism towards interpretivism/constructivism reflected the multi-dimensional shifts and development of understanding as characterised by Wisker et al. (2010).

Deep engagement with philosophical and methodological literature, coupled with a

developing and deepening sense of reflection, reflexivity and personal awareness led me away from my hitherto “mechanical – almost superficial adoption of [a] conceptual position” (ibid., p.15), towards one of authenticity and genuine conviction. As part of this I was able to make the link between philosophical perspectives and my methodological practice, and to recognise my role as researcher and its influence on data gathering and theory construction (Levers, 2013). My personal epistemology, i.e. “the limits of knowledge, the certainty of knowledge and the criteria for knowing” (Kitchener, 1983, p.222) shifted in tandem with my conception of what counted as being important knowledge.

I was able to acknowledge that to date, the PhD had been approached from the perspective of it being a “‘book’ to be written” (Batchelor and Di Napoli, 2006, p.18) within a “compact process characterized by a set of aims, rules and expectations” (ibid.). The preconceived ideas I held about the PhD being processual and formulaic were replaced with arguably more nuanced and insightful perceptions. I had undergone a process of transformative learning, which resulted in a “deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions” (O’Sullivan, 2002, p.11).

This transformation and ontological and epistemological shift did not come easily, nor did it come quickly. It was a gradual, iterative process which was facilitated by my developing confidence as a researcher and my developing familiarity and understanding of the language of my ‘new’ disciplines of education and research methodology (as opposed to my ‘old’ discipline of animal science). As a doctoral student I began “thinking like a researcher” (Trafford and Leshem, 2009, p.311). This change in my identity from student to researcher was the consequence of thinking through my ontological and epistemological positions. By learning more about broad, fundamental concepts regarding philosophy, education and research methodology, I

was facilitating my ontological and epistemological shift, and changing not only what I knew but also who I was (Packer and Giocoechea, 2000).

Meyer and Land's notions of threshold concepts and liminality can usefully characterise my own ontological and epistemological shift. Based on the premise that a discipline or field will have its own fundamental concepts and ways of conceiving knowledge, threshold concepts are characterised as being a junction or place whereby those who are able to comprehend these concepts undergo a transformative (and usually irreversible) learning experience, enabling them to pass into a new and enlightened place of knowledge and understanding.

Threshold concepts are often associated with knowledge that is deemed as being 'troublesome' (Meyer and Land, 2005). Borrowing from Perkins (2006), troublesome knowledge is that which is counter-intuitive or difficult. Typically students' get 'stuck' and are unable to pass through the knowledge portal into a place of new, enlightened learning. This results in an in-between, liminal state whereby an "integration of new knowledge occurs which requires a reconfiguring of the learner's prior conceptual schema and a letting go or discarding of any earlier conceptual stance. This reconfiguration occasions an ontological and an epistemic shift" (Land et al., 2010, xi). This then results in a shift of subjectivity through "a repositioning of the self" (Meyer and Land, 2005, p.374) and in doing so, moves thinking forward to a new level. As Land (2015) suggests, threshold concepts

> builds on the notion that there are certain concepts, or certain learning experiences, which resemble passing through a portal, from which a new perspective opens up, allowing things formerly not perceived to come into view. This permits a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something, without which the learner cannot progress, and results in a reformulation of the learners' frame of meaning…As a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept there may be thus a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even worldview. (pp.18–19)

Shifting my own ontological and epistemological positioning undoubtedly left me in a state of liminality where at times, I felt 'stuck'. My initial inability to conceive of interpretivist/constructivist ideas as having real value left me (for a considerable amount of time) in "a state of 'liminality', a suspended state of partial understanding, or 'stuck place', in which understanding approximates to a kind of 'mimicry' or lack of authenticity" (Land et al., 2010, x). But by continual reflection and by virtue of my on-going development of confidence as a researcher, I was ultimately able to create an authentic position whereby I was able to do more than just apply particular strategies or skills because it was what I knew was expected of me. I was able to do so as a result of developing a genuine set of ontological and epistemological assumptions that reflected the move through liminal spaces from 'stuck' knowledge to threshold crossing into new spaces with new levels of insight and new levels of knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 2004; Land et al., 2010).

In so doing, I achieved genuine "paradigmic knowing" (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007, p.29) about interpretivism/constructivism, which resulted in "(1) a change in the relationship between the person conducting the research and the person participating as the subject; (2) a move from the use of numbers towards the use of words as data; (3) a change from a focus on the general and universal toward the local and the specific; and (4) a widening in acceptance of alternative epistemologies or ways of knowing" (ibid., p.97). As Wisker et al. (2010) remark, doctoral students experience "'aha' moments [which] represent 'leaps of faith' beyond their comfort zones" (p.5), and it at these moments when ontological and epistemological transformations take place. Trafford and Leshem (2009) argue that doing a doctorate and doctorateness is itself a threshold concept, whereby fundamental and irreversible change is triggered by passing through the doctoral knowledge threshold concept as part of the doctoral journey.

My ontological and epistemological shift enabled me to face and to answer my questions from a new, enlightened space. Whilst I had genuinely wanted to answer "*what*?", "*why*?" and "*how*?" (Carcary, 2009) questions, I realise that I was epistemologically confused. Tuli (2010) suggests that epistemology examines ideas regarding, "relationships between the knower and what is known? How do we know what we know? What counts as knowledge?" (p.99). My epistemological confusion resulted in a quandary in respect to working within a paradigm whereby inquiry with small samples sizes and interpretation were central elements.

Such quandaries are not uncommon. Indeed, Mehra (2002) describes how

> beginners in qualitative research classes are generally not very comfortable with the notion that meaningful knowledge can be constructed in a way that provides room for personal and subjective ways of looking at the world. This may be because many of them are more familiar with the positivist traditions of knowledge construction where objectivity and value-neutrality are considered important criteria for evaluating research. (n.p.)

I had failed to fully appreciate the impact of me and of my position within the research process. My notions of reflexivity were crudely formed. Hodgson (2000) talks of reflexivity as something, which "signifies the researcher's part in the social world that is being investigated" (p.3). Berger (2013) adds to this with her assertion that researcher background will affect the questions posed, the language used, the filtering lens used, and ways in which meaning is made, whilst Orne and Bell (2015) suggest how researchers will always have "a partial view… it will be impossible to get a complete collection of data free from the influence of who you are and your research process" (p.41).

In the MPhil/PhD transfer report I claimed to address reflexivity through bracketing. I referred to bracketing as being a "process in which a researcher suspends or holds in abeyance his or her presuppositions, biases, assumptions, theories, or previous experiences to see and describe the phenomenon" (Gearing, 2004, p.1430). I

described my acute awareness of the temptations of allowing personal opinions and views to consciously or unconsciously influence my behaviour in terms of what I chose (or not) to record in field notes, as well as what I felt were important or significant events. I suggested that through adopting Vandenberg and Halls' (2011, p.29) "reflexivity, relationality and reciprocity" approach, I would significantly mitigate the potential for researcher bias. I can reflect upon my own ideas of bracketing and, whilst expressed in good faith, I realise that I took the notion of bracketing to be a simple process of shutting off, or denying my own beliefs as a means of maintaining objectivity, and of being a detached and unbiased researcher. As argued by Finlay (2009), I considered bracketing as being simply a step in my research process to acknowledge and bracket my bias as a means of instituting validity and rigour.

My original understanding of bracketing came from Husserl and his belief that the lived experience could only be exposed when "preconceived ideas were put to one side" (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009, p.8). However, as part of my doctoral development during and after the pilot stage, I revaluated my stance to adopt a view according to the position of Heidegger. An objector to Husserl's bracketing, Heidegger considered the researcher to be, "a legitimate part of the research, as *Being-in-the-world* of the participant" (ibid.). Within Heidegger's notion of *Dasein* or "being-there" (Husu, 2005, n.p.), traditional subject versus object and mind versus reality positions are rejected in favour of considering mind and body as being "nondualistic… persons-and-context as a unity rather than as a duality – person and context" (Hung et al., 2007, p.710). As such, being a human includes being part of the world; I am my world and the world is part of my being. Therefore, my understandings would come through *Dasein* given that "existence and interpretation are the same thing" (ibid). Considering *Dasein* as making a "person's self and world into a single irreducible entity" (Husu, 2005, n.p.), led me to adopt Heidegger's position on the basis that considering one from the other, i.e. self and the world

separately was not achievable. The world is our environment, our "*Umwelt*… our workaday world of every day existence*"* (King, 2001, p.54) in which we are found and which we interpret based upon "understandings[s] of the world with the help of what is already interpreted" (Laforest et al. 2017, p.48). Heidegger (1927/1977) argued how "interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presupponsitionless apprehending of something presented to us" (pp.191–192). Therefore, my fore-having (what I know already), my fore-sight (my view point, my a priori background) and my fore-conception (that which is "grasped in advance…to conceptualise that which we have in fore-having and fore-sight" (Schalow and Denker, 2010, p.114) would be inextricably linked with my interpretations. Therefore, trying to bracket off preconceptions and experience was impossible. My own background, education, thoughts and beliefs would inevitably result in any interpretation of phenomena being undertaken from a stance; there cannot be any neutral, pure mind upon which to consider phenomena. Reading Orne and Bell (2015, p.13) with their rallying cry to harness subjective understandings in order to provide, "methodological insight and innovation", was something of an epiphany. Defined by McDonald (2008, p.99) as, ''an acute awareness of something new, something which the individual had previously been blind to'', this epiphany was one of the 'moments' in the research process when the idea of the site and context and their impact upon teacher practice began to crystalize and take shape. Prior to this, I had been, "closed off to the full range of possibilities for being and relating" (Craig, 1988, p.3).

Just as qualitative research has been through a series of historical 'moments', where epistemological perspectives regarding knowledge and how we know has evolved (Dirkx and Barnes, 2004), I experienced my own 'moments', resulting in my own philosophical epiphany. Prior to my moment of epiphany this narrow view was linked to my confused epistemological state. Expressed by Hofer (2001, p.355) as "the

definition of knowledge, how knowledge is constructed, how knowledge is evaluated, where knowledge resides, and how knowing occurs", my epistemological stance was insecure. However, prolonged engagement both with literature and with personal self-reflection brought about change in the development of my epistemic system (Labbas, 2013). Tickle et al. (2005) suggest that "training or other experiences reflect changes in the cognitive processes of the individual" (p.707) can lead to changes in epistemological beliefs, whilst Cano (2005) proposed that individual beliefs regarding epistemology evolve and change over time, "becoming less *naïve* and simplistic, and more realistic and complex" (p.215).

I believe I can draw parallels with my own progress towards developing a more sophisticated epistemology (Schommer, 1990), with 'moments' and changes seen in social science methodology. Coining the phrase, *the interpretive turn*, Rabinow and Sullivan (1979) used it as a means of describing the epistemological shift from positivism towards interpretivism, which began in the late 20th century (Howe, 1998). Akin to this 'interpretive turn', my epistemology and outlook finally enabled me to look at the social world as, "a subjectively experienced construct", as opposed to merely "a collection of external facts" (Mottier, 2005, n.p.): a view I held when still allied to positivism. This 'turn' enabled me to look at the main study and the PhD overall with a different set of eyes and enabled me to acknowledge and respond to the criticisms raised by those reviewing the MPhil/PhD transfer report.

The consequences of this transformation changed my conceptions regarding the entire study and about my conception of pedagogy. I realised that the pilot had been used for me to 'test' my methods for the main study, methods I had chosen from my then positivist position. I had viewed methods and methodology merely as tools and strategies to use to gather 'objective, scientific data', rather than as a discourse to

engage with. I realised that questions about what and how to research involved epistemic decisions.

My ontological and epistemological shift enabled me to re-frame by methodological assumptions and to fully embrace interpretivist/constructivist notions of knowledge as being context-specific. Further, I accepted my own central role in knowledge construction and research practice (Goodley and Lawthom, 2010), and the need to know oneself before one can know another (Pitard, 2017). As part of this I acknowledged the need to re-focus my interactions and my interviews with participants in order to bring their voices into the foreground to give them greater freedom of expression to tell their stories (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

3.6 Research questions and responding to criticism regarding definitions of pedagogy

My ontological and epistemological transformation led to me re-framing my conceptions of pedagogy. The specific research question for this study aimed to explore and theorise *what* HE pedagogic practices HE in FE teachers adopted in a specific college. The question aimed to explore *how* and *why* particular pedagogic approaches were adopted. Within the transfer report I used the definition of Greenwood (2010a) for pedagogy, where pedagogy was defined as:

1. The profession of teaching
2. The activities of educating, teaching or instructing
3. The strategies of instruction.

However, following reviewer feedback and deeper engagement with pedagogy-related literature, I reached the conclusion that this definition was superficial and narrow, failing to fully capture the multi-dimensional nature of pedagogy. I had taken pedagogy to be merely the manifestation of teaching practices and methods in class. I had wholly failed to consider it in a more holistic, and theoretical way. Rejecting the

original definition as proposed by Greenwood (2010a), I subsequently aligned myself with Westbrook et al. (2013) by sharing the view that far from being a mechanical set of rules and practices enacted by teachers, pedagogy is made up of teachers', "ideas, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and understanding about the curriculum, the teaching and learning process and their students, and which impact on their 'teaching practices', that is, what teachers actually think, do and say in the classroom" (p.7). Significantly for this study, Westbrook et al. (2013) suggest that context, as well as social, cultural and political aspects all contribute to wider notions of teaching and pedagogy. My ontological and epistemological transformation led me to consider pedagogy as discourse, rather than as a collection of tools and strategies used by teachers.

3.7 "The material turn" – Developing a turn towards sociomaterial and practice theory

One of my five original research questions (*To assess impacts and implications of an FE Landbased College environment for teachers delivering HE in FE Animal/Equine Studies courses)* did concern the 'college environment', but this was based largely on personal 'hunch' that the nature and culture of an FEC had the potential to contribute to how HE in FE expressed itself within a college, rather than on anything more theoretically substantial.

Acquainting myself with a new and broader definition of pedagogy was my first 'turn' towards adopting sensitivity towards ideas of sociomateriality. Considered as representing another 'turn' in social science research, "the material turn" represents an "increased interest in the active role of the material world" (Lenz Taguchi, 2010 p.12), with new importance attached to matter and materiality beyond considering them only as, "a background, an outcome or a medium" (Törnberg, 2013, n.p.). Fenwick (2012) describes how materials such as, "texts and technologies, furniture and locks, flesh and instruments, storms and bacteria" (p.3) interlock with the social

aspects of how people work, something which, “fundamentally shapes practice and knowledge” (ibid.) in order that, “practice and knowing” (ibid.) can be enacted within a particular way, within particular contexts. Kuntz and Berger (2011) suggest how qualitative research often overlooks the material environment. Rather than considering material artefacts to be merely background objects, sociomateriality considers how such artefacts and the environment are “integral to the enactment of human existence and social life” (Fenwick and Edwards, 2013, p.49).

Drawing upon theoretical traditions including science technology studies (STS) and actor-network theory (ANT) (Schraube and Sørensen, 2013), sociomaterial approaches can be used to analyse practices and enactments between humans and non-human artefacts by “making visible the everyday, particular micro-dynamics of education and learning” (Fenwick and Landri, 2012, pp.3-4).

The constituent entities that contribute to a sociomaterial assemblage (Suchman, 2007), e.g. technological, human, material or social, are inextricably linked and should be considered as being inseparable (Johri, 2011). Like Heidegger who held with the notion that context shaped understanding (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009), the idea of a particular context and the site impacting upon practice was a recurring theme in my reading, with the idea of the place and the need to acknowledge the intrinsic “socialness of things” (Fahlander, 2017, p.74) particularly resonating within me.

It provided me with a theoretical lens through which to consider both the FE and HE artefacts and practices, which I had both seen and heard during the pilot data collection phase. From the hand-drawn posters of guinea pigs on classroom walls, to the overtly parental language style used by teachers towards HE students, it marked a moment where a theoretical allegiance was formed to enable me to make sense of the impact of such artefacts and practices upon the nature of the HE provided by the

college. It created a realisation that to refer only to pedagogy (then considered only as ‘teaching and teaching practices’), was not a realistic approach to answering my research questions. The ways in which teachers approached and perceived and delivered their HE teaching was bound up in the place, its customs and practices.

Schatzki (2002, p.77) defines practices as being an

> organized nexuses of actions. This means that the doings and sayings composing them hang together. More specifically, the doings and sayings that compose a given practice are linked through (1) practical understandings, (2) rules, (3) a teleoaffective structure, and (4) general understandings. Together, the understandings, rules and teleoaffective structure that link the doings and sayings of a practice form its organization.

The premise that “knowing is always situated and therefore is particular to particular settings and communities” (Fenwick, 2012, p.4), and what Carlile et al. (2013, p.3) suggest with regard to matter, i.e. non-human, material things, actually mattering because it “generates consequences for how we experience and act in our world”, began the underlying theoretical foundation upon to build the study beyond the pilot phase. To meaningfully explore pedagogic practice in isolation was repudiated as a means of progressing the PhD; the wider context and sociomaterial assemblages and its constituent practices, together with its inherent messiness and complexity, would have to be considered.

This new insight led me to alter my focus to look not at pedagogic practices in the abstract, but to put them in context with the material and non-human artefacts at the college. This ‘moment’ in the doctoral journey signalled an important stage of enlightenment and one, which influenced the ways in which data was collected, interpreted and theorised.

3.8 Justifying the single case study approach

As a natural corollary to this, my newly embraced theoretical stance drew me towards undertaking this exploration via a single case study method. In the original transfer report I proposed that the main phase of data collection would comprise of three or four similarly constituted LBCs. However, given my change in approach and my adoption of a sociomaterially, PT-sensitised study, a single case was deemed to be the most appropriate means in which to undertake such a study. Aligning myself to the definition proposed by Stake (2008, pp.119-120), this study considered the college as being a "functioning specific" and a "bounded system". Utilising a single case was vital in enabling me to explore themes described by Stake (1995, p.xi) as "particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances". This focus on the specific led me to adopt a broader and more sociomaterially sensitive suite of data collection methods, details of which will come later within this chapter.

3.9 Moving towards a Grounded Theory (GT) approach

Given the acute lack of scrutiny regarding LBCs and their attendant pedagogies and practices, the area was under-theorised, lacking any "plausible existing theory" (Eisenhart and Graebner, 2007, p.26) by which to reasonably frame, explore and interpret findings.

As a means of creating a congruent relationship between the sociomaterial/practice theory sensitised theoretical framework and single case study approach, the on-going process of reflection throughout the pilot process led me towards adopting a Grounded Theory (GT) approach. An inductive qualitative research approach, GT provides theory-building opportunities in topics under explored or those not subject to any previous scrutiny (Byrne, 2001). These theories and theoretical statements are generated from the data, as opposed to production via verification of a hypothesis

(Maloney, 2005), with participants acting as guides to highlight to the researcher interesting situations and instances (Orne and Bell, 2015). Such philosophical foundations resonated with my interpretive approach to the study, as well as being consistent with the research methodology.

Originally developed by Strauss and Glaser in the 1960s, a more recent iteration has emerged. Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) (Charmaz, 2000) "reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants in the research process and in doing so brings to the fore the notion of the researcher as author" (Mills, Bonner and Francis, 2006, p.31). GT is discussed more fully in Chapter 5. At present it is sufficient to conclude that the ability of CGT to provide a flexible, systematic method using qualitative data to "construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves" (Charmaz, 2006, p.2) made it the clear choice to employ when working in an under-theorised area.

3.10 Revised research questions and title to reflect sociomaterial / practice / grounded theory

Given the adoption of a broader, sociomaterial/ PT-sensitised GT study, the natural consequence of rethinking and refining the original title and research questions was required. It was important that the reframed questions were congruent with the philosophical and theoretical and frameworks and research design within this study (Trede and Higgs, 2009). Given the philosophical and theoretical turn I had experienced, the research questions were rewritten to better reflect the sensitivity to the sociomaterial/PT, and to substantive theory construction. Further, the research title was also reframed in order to more accurately represent the study's aim and purpose. This resulted in one research question – *When teaching HE at Shireland College, what do these HE in FE teachers do, how do they do it, and why?* – and a revised title – *A Constructivist Grounded Theory of HE teacher practice enactments at a landbased college.*

3.11 How completing the transfer and pilot influenced main study approaches and methods

Whilst broadly retaining the data collection approach described earlier in the chapter, the main phase of data collection was undertaken from a more reflexive, and sociomaterial/practice/grounded theory orientated standpoint, a standpoint that had been arrived at by virtue of my ontological and epistemological transformation. This new reflexive understanding of my role as researcher meant my research was to be a co-constructed product between myself and my teacher participants (Finlay, 2002), as opposed to my being a detached, objective interviewer and observer, was taken forward into the main study.

With reference to my newly found sociomatieral/practice/grounded theory sensitivity, it entailed me adopting greater material awareness with regard to the physical environment and material artefacts within it. In order to attempt to gain an understanding of the enabling and constraining factors experienced by the HE teachers, situational information specific to the college was needed. Rich, contextualised understanding of college strategy, pedagogy, technology, environment, and anything else contextually relevant to pedagogic practice enactment were collected (Gaskin et al., 2014).

Whereas the pilot had focused predominantly on verbal exchanges and interviews with teachers, and upon watching and listening to participants whilst they undertook teaching sessions, a greater material awareness led me to be far more attentive to the place and to 'things'. What were classrooms like? How was furniture arranged? What was the furniture like? What college notices adorned the walls? What language style was used within them? What uniforms did staff and students wear? What were the opening hours for the college canteen and for the library? This material awareness ensured that I focused further on gathering multiple sources of data to establish a "chain of evidence" (Yin, 2003, p.34). Unlike in the pilot, the main study

augmented interviews and observations with written documentation produced by the college, including those found within course handbooks, staff development policies and web-based materials and artefacts. The full range of methods adopted and artefacts collected will be discussed in full within Chapter 6.

3.12 Changes to the methodology for main data collection phase

Following the pilot study and generation of the transfer report, I discontinued the use of two data collection methods:

1. Biographical questionnaire
2. *Approaches to Teaching Inventory* (ATI) (Prosser and Trigwell, 1993).

Feedback from the teacher participants indicated that the biographical questionnaire took too long to complete (47 questions, 13 pages). In order to obtain background biographical information about the teacher participants and to minimise the risk of placing undue burden upon them (Patel et al., 2003), I included biographical and HE background questions and prompts within an informal discussion in an initial rapport-building interview instead. Perhaps more significantly given my newly embraced qualitative, interpretive stance, I recognised that using questionnaires and scales can be limiting in the ways in which participants can respond (Sullivan, 2002). Given my desire to engage with the teacher participants in order to create co-construction of meaning between me as researcher, and the participants, having more opportunities to actually talk to them, and with them, made more sense given the interpretivist foundations of the PhD study.

As a natural consequence, this led to my discontinuing the *Approaches to Teaching Inventory* (ATI) (Prosser and Trigwell, 1993). As a quantitative research instrument, I considered its inclusion to be contrary to the philosophical and theoretical perspectives of this interpretivist study. Whilst it provided a ‘score’ of participants’

conceptions of their teaching approaches, it would not bring any sense of illumination or understanding as to why teachers scored as they did. Given that the aim of the study was to explore and theorise HE pedagogic practice within a specific site, dialogue with participants was considered to be a more appropriate and more powerful method to employ.

3.13 Chapter summary and impact of the transfer process upon the PhD study

The process of undertaking the pilot study was truly transformatory and created a re-orientation of the initial direction of the PhD. By transforming my ontological and epistemological position, by developing my own reflexivity and a deeper appreciation and understanding of pedagogy, I was able to modify my thinking and position towards interpretivism/constructivism. As a consequence, I was able to discover sociomaterialism, PT and GT, around which the PhD subsequently cohered.

The development of my personal reflexivity was a key moment. Mantzoukas (2005) suggests how a qualitative researcher

> needs to reveal his/her preconceptions and presuppositions through a reflective process. Being reflective prior to the research process actually commences leads to the transformation of this reflective process into a reflexive one, whereby the researcher's reflections influence, change, shape and re-shape the study. (pp.289–290)

Erikson (1986) advocates engaging in "deliberate scrutiny of his or her own interpretative point of view, and of its sources in formal theory, culturally learned ways of seeing, and personal value commitments" as a means of learning "more about the world out there… more about himself or herself" (p.156). I believe this transition to reflexivity did take place, and forever changed my outlook, for the PhD specifically, and for myself more generally. With reference to doctoral studies, Batchelor and Di Napoli (2006) suggest "fundamental changes happen during the voyage… When you reach your destination, you are different. The changes that

occur are ontological as well as epistemological. They are changes in 'who you are' as well as 'what you know'. They contribute to shaping your voice for being and becoming, as a person, as well as your voice for knowing" (Batchelor and Di Napoli (pp.13-14). This neatly captures my own experiences. I moved from being an analyst and objective reporter, to an interpreter and co-creator of knowledge. My measures of quality changed from those of reliability and validity (Winter, 2000, n.p.), to those of trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Significantly, I came to realise the importance of discourse. I realised that all discourse (including that which concerns pedagogy, HE in FE, education etc.) is philosophically grounded. As such, it will reflect particular stances and assumptions. Further, discourses can reflect ideologies. As Fairclough (1992) contends, discourse does not simply "reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct them or "constitute" them" (pp.3-4). This new meaning enabled me to look at subsequent discourses with a new sense of their significance. Discourse did not just mean strategies, tools and things people said, it had far deeper ideological roots and would need to be examined with this in mind.

By working through troublesome knowledge and exploring self, I was able to construct a new ontological and epistemological position from which to move the PhD forward onto a knowledge base, which was philosophically authentic and secure. Having discussed the catalysts for adopting a PT-sensitised GT, the following chapter describes and discusses PT more fully and its place within the study.

Chapter 4: Practice Theory

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two chapters wherein two distinct, yet related analyses of the literature – one regarding PT, and one regarding GT – are discussed. These chapters seek to illuminate pertinent aspects of both bodies of literature, and to contextualise them within this study, as a means of foregrounding it within this particular theoretical landscape. In so doing, I describe their key features and provide a full justification as to why these theoretical approaches were apposite for addressing my research question. As a corollary to this, these theoretical approaches then provided the philosophical direction for the methodological approach and concomitant methods used to collect data, all of which are discussed in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 6).

4.1 Definitions of practice

Before embarking upon a discussion of PT, it essential to be clear with regard to definitions and terminology. 'Practice' frequently appears in academic literature courtesy of a number of manifestations including 'best practice', 'practice led', 'practice based', 'good practice', 'reflective practice' and so on. Despite its ubiquity, Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde (2005) warn that 'practice' has experienced "'terminology drift', a process by which useful educational ideas become overly popular, are carelessly used, and come un-moored from their original meanings" (2005, p.V). With this notion of drift in mind, and to situate practice within an educational context, I began to consider definitions of practice with a seemingly very simplistic one proffered by Carr and Kemmis (1986): that of practice being "what teachers do in meeting the tasks and demands confronting them in their everyday work" (p.2). Whilst this undoubtedly satisfies some aspects of practice, I considered it to be too one-dimensional and insufficiently all-encompassing.

When considering doctoral research to explore teaching practices, I instinctively gravitated towards notions of teacher practice as being far in excess of a simple, behaviouristic performance of merely mindlessly 'doing'. Rather, I took 'practice' to be far more complex and nuanced and sought to find an approach to both make visible, and to make sense of such multi-dimensional complexity. The notion of action being the visible element of practice, whilst the practice itself being a composite of both explicit and implicit features (Rohde, 2010) drew me to considering that this study would demand an unearthing of the particular practices and practice traditions (termed by Kemmis et al. (2014a, p.58) as being "the way we do things around here"), if any understanding of HE practices at Shireland College was to be achieved. Emmerich (2013) asserts how assuming a practice perspective is to "attempt to move past epistemologies that are restricted to or privilege propositional knowledge" (p.74). Higgs et al. (2008) differentiate between propositional and non-propositional knowledge in terms of being "theory-generated" (propositional) or "experienced-based" (non-propositional) (p.155). This distinction is significant for the study of practice, as it considers both formal knowledge and its interplay with embedded, 'knowing how', tacit, "embodied knowledge" (Polanyi, 1966, p.5), and their impact upon the enactment of practice.

As maintained by Higgs (2012), "Practices are more ethereal than are material entities. Whereas material entities and activities can be directly perceived…practices must be uncovered…other means than direct experience must be seized to uncover them" (p.24). How the process of uncovering practices unfolded is discussed in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 6). For now, it is sufficient to conclude that given the multi-faceted nature of practice, a complementary methodological approach would be required in order to reveal the 'hidden' elements of practice.

Like Edwards-Groves and Grootenboer (2015), I held that “practices occur and are enmeshed with particular kinds of nuanced arrangements found at specific sites, like particular classrooms in particular schools in particular communities” (p.151). I looked to Schatzki (2002) for a definition of site, which he referred to as being a context “where things exist and events happen” (p.63), with ‘context’ being “an arena or set of phenomena that surrounds or immerses something and enjoys powers of determination with respect to it” (Schatzki, 2005, p.468). With this in mind, I used site to refer to Shireland College; its physical space, including its material artefacts, culture, policies, management and organisation.

Letiche and Lightfoot (2014) hold that practices are always site-bound by virtue of them being “concrete, actualized and immediate” (p.55). Developing the site-specific theme, I also held with Lloyd et al. (2013) and their assertion that, as well as the practice being site-specific, the practice enacted in specific sites reflected “the ‘heritaged’ conditions of the social setting and the ways of knowing that are legitimized as part of the cultural practices of the setting” (p.127). It was notions of particularity, rather than generality, and of a value-laden site “seeped in culture” (Kennedy et al., 2015, p.9) and historicity, that led me towards adopting a PT-sensitised approach to this research.

For the purposes of this study, I aligned myself with a more holistic and arguably complex definition of practice than that as offered by Carr and Kemmis (1986). Reckwitz (2002) suggests how practice is “a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (p.250). In contrast to Carr and Kemmis (1986), this characterisation is more persuasive as it encompasses people, things and notions of understanding. However, I considered that it failed to bring to light the social and relational aspects, which are integral to practice. In response to this, Lee and Dunston (2011) assert

that practices are “complex socio-material accomplishments, multi-dimensional, situated, embodied, and fundamentally relational” (p.489). Whilst these definitions undoubtedly capture more facets of practice than those of Carr and Kemmis (1986) and Reckwitz (2002), I was more persuaded by later writings of Kemmis (2009) with his assertion that “practice is not just ‘raw activity’, it is always shaped and oriented in its course by ideas, meanings and intentions. Practice always involves values – it is always value laden and it always raises moral questions” (p.22). By considering that those who are enacting practices are doing so with intent suggests going beyond simply what they do, thus enabling an exploration of the meaning and intention behind the practices, and a better understanding of them.

Of all of the definitions, it was that of Kemmis (2009) that I considered came closest to capturing the complexity of practice, and thus I used it to inform conceptions of practice within this research. I also recognised the situatedness and relational ideas from Lee and Dunston (2011) and the embedded, i.e. implicit, unseen structures proposed by Boud and Hager, both of which are key features of practice. Rather than practice being static and immutable, ideas of practice being able to change and transform (Boud and Hager, 2012) were both appealing personally, and integral to cementing my own stance on what practice is.

Having established what ‘practice’ refers and relates to, I concurred with Boud and Hager (2012) and their assertion that

> ‘Practice’ is increasingly being viewed as a fruitful lens through which to analyse all kinds of human activity. The notion of practice provides a holistic way of thinking that integrates what people do, where they do it, with whom and for what purpose. It links the person with the activity and the context in which the activity occurs. (p.22)

This holistic rationale chimed with my aspirations for the direction of this research, giving both impetus to answer my research question, and validation that sensitivity to

PT would be entirely appropriate given the aim to explore and theorise teacher practices within a specific site.

4.2 Practice Theory (PT) – Definitions

Throughout recent decades PT has begun to emerge and to gain currency (Higgs, 2012). In common with the term practice, PT is not subject to neat and absolute definitions and is considered by many to be something of an umbrella term for a range of ideas which form a "family of theories" (Reckwitz, 2002, p.244), "not a uniform and homogenous theoretical corpus" (Nicolini, 2012, p.214). The evolution and development of PT has led to it being theoretically considered as a "relatively unsettled intellectual landscape with multiple sources, influences, and instances" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p.1241). Rather, writers and theorists talk of PT as being a collection of theories, all of which, to a greater or lesser extent, focus upon the nature of practice, how practice is routinized, and how it becomes embodied as performance. Irrespective of the nuances of any particular branch of it, "practice theory is distinguished from other cultural theories by foregrounding practice" (Finch and Nynäs, 2011, p.12). Whilst Reid (2011) suggests that PT refers to "the epistemological tradition that concerns itself with 'how things get done' in everyday life" (p.229), I suggest it is not merely a superficial examination of 'what people do'; rather it is more complex and is not simply the provision of detailed or thick descriptions of human conduct and activity (Nicolini, 2012).

Central to PT is practice being phenomena that are "situated, mediated and relational" (Rooney et al., 2014, p.269). All PT emphasises the social and the organised nature of practice, with activity embracing multiple people (Higgs, 2012). Aside from considering situatedness and its tacit dimension, a central aspect of PT approaches takes into account the influence of materials and artefacts, the nature of human and non-human interaction and the "inseparability of cognitive, affective,

social and material relations in every kind of practice" (Zürcher, 2015, p.79). The extent to which non-human materials have agency and influence upon practice is contested but the underlying premise that materiality is integral to practice, is an aspect which appears to have consensus amongst practice theorists positioned along all loci on the PT spectrum.

Significantly, PT has anti-dualist social philosophy origins (Ritzer and Ryan, 2011). This is one of its key defining features and one that actively attempts to counter the traditional structure and agency dualism debates that have long been a feature of social science research. Bueger and Gadinger (2014) assert that the traditional dichotomies of "agency and structure, micro and macro, subject and object, individual and society, mind and body or the ideational and the material are more of a hindrance than a help to better understand the world" (p.3). Instead, PT focuses not on solely on individual actors or social structures, but on both of these aspects, along with the actual practices that are situated within a particular site (Trowler, 2012). This is in contrast to structuralist and social system theories "where systems principles or abstract structures and mechanisms [become] central to social phenomena" (Higgs, 2012, p.13). As a researcher looking to explore practices of a specific group of people, the idea that "human life must be understood as forms of, or as rooted in, human activity" (p.13), rather than systems or networks was more persuasive. A personal, human lens, rather than a detached systems and networks one which de-humanizes the people involved, reducing them to nameless 'actors', was a fundamental part of my decision to elect to undertake a PT sensitised approach to this doctoral research. As suggested by Whittington (2006), "for practice theory, people count" (p.615).

The idea of taking social practice as the analytic unit, rather than social structures or individual agency (Saunders, 2011) appeared to be a more holistic and joined-up

approach to enable sense making at a particular site. In concert with Caldwell (2012), I considered that “practices, agency and artifacts are all mutually constituted within ‘social practices’” (p.5), thus making a holistic, rather than fractured analyses the most effective way in which to explore a particular site.

Finally, I looked to Nicolini (2012) and his assertion that

> all practice-based approaches…put emphasis on the importance of power, conflict, and politics as constitutive elements of the social reality we experience. Practices, in fact, literally put people (and things) in place, and they give (or deny) people the power to do things and to think of themselves in certain ways. (p.6)

I considered this aspect of PT to be particularly relevant to this study. As teachers within a minority group at Shireland College, i.e. teaching HE, operating within a site where FE and its associated discourses and demands dominated the institution, I considered that HE teaching practices, and the voices of those HE teachers, were potentially more susceptible to the influences of power, conflict, and politics.

4.3 Practice Theory and the Practice Turn – Origins and antecedents of Practice Theory

PT enjoys an eclectic heritage drawn from a diverse range of theoretical perspectives. The purpose of this next section is not to provide a comprehensive critique of PT and every conceivable branch within it. Indeed, this would extend well beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, it is to provide a brief illustration with regard to key theorists and ideas.

As it is contemporarily conceived and understood, PT can trace its roots back to the 1970s. Dissatisfied with other theoretical traditions being unable to satisfactorily account for, and to resolve seemingly intractable, Procrustean binaries (Stern, 2003) of “actor/system, social/material, body/mind, and theory/action” (Nicolini, 2012, p.2), Nicolini (2012) suggests how Marxist, Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian traditions

broadly “conjured up a clearing in social theory that allowed practice to … [become] the centre of discussion” (p.41). Bourdieu and Giddens are also attributed with seeking to overcome these traditional dualisms (Brynjulf, 2015).

An interest in practice with regard to human action and systems, what people did, what people said, attention to tacit knowledge, how they interacted with materials, notions of agency and the agent in actions to produce and reproduce, gained new and significant attention amongst social theorists in the 1970s. Crucially for exponents of practice, these facets influenced each other and could not be studied independently. An holistic, unified approach was needed. Whilst not PT as it is conceived of currently, it marked a change in social theorising toward post-structuralist, post-modern notions to account for social life in its broadest sense.

Whilst Theodore Schatzki and his publication *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001) is widely attributed with being the first publication to unite those allied under the broad banner of PT, the interest in problematizing traditional dualisms, and of paying close attention to practice in context, began some twenty years earlier (Stern, 2003). The term ‘Practice Theory’ is associated with Schatzki, but Sherry Ortner has been noted as being the originator of the neologism “theories of practice” (Bueger, 2014, p.383), a forerunner of the term ‘Practice Theory’.

An anthropologist, Ortner’s (1984) paper, *Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties,* described the rejection of structuralist and functionalist ideas that dominated anthropology (and sociology) during the middle of the twentieth century, i.e. of large overarching structures having priority over agents and determining individual and collective behaviours, in favour of a burgeoning interest in notions of agency and subjectivity (Meierhenrich, 2013). Ortner’s (1984) view promoted analysing practice, action, performance and activity to explore “the doer of all that doing” (p.144) within the ‘system’ (with system conceived not in a ridged structuralist sense, but as a more

holistic “relatively seamless whole” (p.148) comprised of symbols, materials and institutions). In her view, only from this position could practices within the system be explained as a whole. Such was the impact of the paper, Postill (2010) remarked how its publication signaled the discipline of anthropology’s own ‘turn to practice’.

Ortner (1984) observed the “growing interest in analysis focussed through one or another of a bundle of interrelated terms: practice, praxis, action, interaction, activity, experience, performance" (pp.44–45). Conceiving of PT as seeking to “explain the genesis, reproduction, and change of form and meaning of a given social/cultural whole” (p.149) … [by] explain[ing] the relationship(s) that obtain between human action, on the one hand, and some global entity which we call ‘the system’ on the other”" (p.148), Ortner defined PT as an emerging “symbol of theoretical orientation” (p.127) as opposed to be being “a method or theory in itself” (ibid). She was also keen to acknowledge that whilst her essay was predominantly focused upon her own field of anthropology, the broader interest in practice garnered attention from traditions and disciplines beyond her own discipline. Indeed, her prediction that practice would increasingly be used to study people and systems through practice has been borne out.

Ortner’s paper suggested how the move towards symbols and symbolic actions, a shift from macro- to micro-level research and a move away from attending to rules and of conduct associated with structuralist approaches, to a position whereby *how* people actually conducted themselves in their social worlds, was taken up (Pilaro, 2005).

Further, Ortner’s anthropological heritage of studying people and practices in specific societies endowed subsequent studies of practice and PT with an imperative to use observation and ethnography in the field to gather data by which to explore and to understand the seen and the unseen. Ortner (1984) was clear that viewing how

people and systems work could only be achieved through “ground level [work], largely developed in the field…our location on the ground” (p.143). She also reinforced the need for those studying practice to recall that specific cultures/places/societies are not “islands unto themselves, with little sense of the larger systems of relations in which these units are embedded” (p.142). As such, the study of practice requires an examination of “larger regional processes” (ibid.) with an “analysis of its relations with the larger context within which it operates” (p.143).

Ortner’s background in anthropology firmly impressed the imperative of grounded ethnography to be a core component of PT studies. As she further contended, adopting ground level approaches to “see otherness” (ibid.) was vital if researchers were “to learn anything at all – even in our own culture – beyond what we know already (ibid.). This underlying tenet directly influenced the methodological approach used for this study, whereby an ethnographic, field based study with sustained engagement in the research site was adopted (see Chapter 6). Her direction to look beyond the immediate research site and to consider and analyse it within a wider political and contextual landscape is also embraced within this study.

In summary, Ortner’s seminal paper did both reflect temporal changes that were afoot, and instigate further change in social theorising more broadly to bring notions of practice and theories of practice into mainstream social theorising, of which contemporary PT is a direct descendant.

Since Ortner, Jensen (2015) suggests that PT has developed apace, largely inspired by Theodore Schatzki and his publication *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001) (with Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny). The subsequent ‘turn to practice’ led to a refocusing of the theoretical gaze of researchers away from systems and cultures towards a direction of the practices of others, by “turning our telescopes or microscopes in different directions at different objects” (Eikeland, 2007, p.5). Whilst

Gimmler (2012) refers to the 'Practice Turn' as being not being a clearly and definitely demarcated theoretical approach amongst social and practice theorists, this orientation towards practice and "knowing and learning in everyday activity" (Fenwick, 2012, p.4) has seen increased social science research with a focus on practice and practitioners, particularly within a work-related context. This shift in contemporary theorising regarding social life "embodies a certain way of understanding what is (ontology) and what it means to know (epistemology)" (Crotty, 1998, p.10).

Schatzki continues to profoundly influence PT, but his conception of PT has emanated from works from earlier scholars. Postill (2011) regards PT as having two generations of practice theorists: twentieth-century theorists including Foucault, Bourdieu and Giddens, each of whom laid the theoretical foundation for what is now viewed as PT; and a second wave who have taken PT in order to test and develop it further.

Of the first generation of practice theorists (or early PT scholars), Foucault is considered to have particular significance to PT by virtue of his conception of power and the connections between power, knowledge and practice (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). According to Watson (2017), "within practice theory, power is ubiquitous… Human action is… always influenced from elsewhere; it is the effects of relationships which are arguably always power relations" (p.69). As such, power is a fundamental component of all social relations, with practice(s) serving as the means by which social relations are comprised and reproduced. Watson continues by suggesting how Foucault and his notions of power form a key part of the intellectual heritage of PT. As such, the relationship between power, PT and practice is ontologically vital to the tenets of PT.

Rather than being viewed as being only a repressive force to be imposed by governments or by powerful individuals, Foucauldian notions of power conceive it as productive (Healy, 2000) and as an effect rather than an object (Watson, 2017). Operating through local practices with "our bodies, our existence, our everyday lives" (Foucault, 1978, p.70), power is everywhere and it is a constituent part of "discourses, knowledges and 'identity'" (Healy, 2000, p.44). Significantly for PT, Foucault's focus is concerned with examining practices within specific contexts, and how power is exercised within local contexts (Healy, 2000).

Foucault contends that power is associated with particular discourses, with discourses serving to enable particular things to be deemed as being "sayable whilst marginalizing other[s]" (ibid). Foucault conceives discourse as involving regularity, and as being more than merely the spoken word. Rather discourse "is not a consciousness that embodies its project in the external form of language; it is not a language plus a subject to speak it. It is a practice that has its own forms of sequence and succession" (Foucault, 1972, p.169). As an instrument of power, discourses serve to normalise certain practices by virtue of particular discourses having

> a type of systematicity which is neither logical nor linguistic...[They] are characterised by the demarcation of a field of objects, by the definition of a legitimate perspective for a subject of knowledge, by the setting of norms for elaborating concepts and theories. Hence each of them presupposes a play of prescriptions that govern exclusions and selections. (Foucault, 1994, p.11)

As such, discourses shape how institutions are assembled and how behaviours are expressed through "types of transmission and dissemination, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them" (Foucault, 1997, p.12). Essentially, discourses dictate what may or may not be said and done, i.e. practised, in particular places.

This ability for discourses to direct action and practice is determined by Foucault's conception of knowledge and its relationship with power. Foucault (1977) suggests

“power and knowledge directly imply one another… there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations” (p.27). Therefore those with the power to govern knowledge within an institution (and tell others how to act and practise) are able to “structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault, 1982b, p.221), thereby influencing the operation of those in that institution. As Foucault (1982a) contends, “basically power is… a question of government” (p.789).

Essential to notions of practice (as conceived within the realm of PT as a broad theoretical confederation of ideas and tenets), the role of power (specifically Foucault’s conception of it) and its relationship with discourse, practices and everyday lives in local contexts within particular institutions, is essential to explore if practices are to be understood (Healy, 2000).

Following the first generation of practice theorists and their attendance to notions concerning structure and agency, and embodied practice, those from the second generation (led by Schatzki), e.g. Nicolini, Gherardi and Landri, use PT as a means of exploring more diverse practices including those concerned with organisations, leisure and domestic practices. Still concerned with the body in practice, this later wave of practice theorists devotes more attention to historical and cultural aspects than their first generation counterparts. Alongside these, Reid (2014) suggests how the emergence of PT within education can be considered to be part of a third generation, in which she identifies Kemmis as being a leading proponent.

When considering a PT-sensitised study, extensive reading inevitably led me towards those writers who fell within more sociomaterially orientated forms of PT; namely Latour (1993) and Callon (1986) (Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Science Technology Studies (STS) and Engeström (2015) (Activity Theory and Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), as well as Nicolini and Fenwick. Focusing on

networks and systems, as well as the interaction between humans and technology, and humans and things, sociomaterial studies are considered to sit within the PT family, with Hopwood (2014) suggesting how contemporary PT emerged as a distinctive companion to sociomaterial studies. Key to sociomaterial studies is that of agency and the role of non-human artefacts and materials within social sites. As mentioned earlier, ideas surrounding agency of non-humans are contested, with PT perspectives having differing views on human and non-human agency. Knappett and Malafouris (2008) describe how with ANT, Callon (1986) and Latour (1993) give equal agency to all through notions of 'generalised symmetry', thereby rejecting any distinction between humans and non-humans, whilst Fenwick and Nimmo (2015) describe human agency as not being privileged.

Whilst my thinking undoubtedly developed a sensitivity towards materiality in terms of the role material, non-human *things*, it did not extend towards fully embracing sociomateriality. The assertion by Fenwick (2010) that "sociomaterial perspectives challenge the givenness of fundamental distinctions between human and non-human" (p.108) is not one that I could reconcile within the bounds of this study. Whilst I held with Fenwick and Edwards (2013) that material objects are "integral to the enactment of human existence and social life" (p.49), I saw them in terms of prefiguring rather than predetermining practice. In concert with Schatzki (2012), I acknowledged and accepted the idea that what people say and do when enacting practice is almost always done in conjunction with some dealings with material entities. Indeed, Nicolini (2012) suggests that material objects "make practices durable and connect practices with each other across space and time" (p.4). He gives examples regarding how the arrangement of seats in a classroom and other objects, e.g. a whiteboard or PC, will "actively participate in both producing and perpetuating the activity of conducting a class [to]… both participate in the accomplishment of the practice and make this accomplishment durable over time"

(p.4). I am persuaded by this interpretation of the interplay between humans and material artefacts, and can relate to this myself when being within a classroom setting. I also accept the position of Fenwick and Edwards (2013) and their assertion that

> material things are performative and not inert; they are matter and they matter. They act together with other types of things and forces to exclude, invite, and order particular forms of participation in enactments, some of which we term “adult education” and/or “lifelong learning. (p.53)

However, the “deliberate focus on materials” in sociomaterially orientated PT as espoused by Fenwick and Nimmo (2015, p.68) does not strike the right balance when exploring human practices, seemingly being at odds with the socialness and essential human focus that PT purports to encompass. Ideas of non-human things being symmetrical with humans are rejected in favour of considering material artefacts as being significant to practice, but under the terms proposed by Schatzki (2011), namely, that they “ubiquitously prefigure practices—that is, the continued happening of the doings and sayings that compose specific practice—by making some actions, *inter alia*, easier and harder or more direct or circuitous than others” (p.10). More strongly aligned sociomaterial branches of PT are discounted in favour of a PT which pays attention to materiality and artefacts, but does not give non-human artefacts equal status with human actors.

4.4 Why study Practice Theory? – Shireland College and research aims

To enable me to comprehend the complexity of practice of HE teachers at Shireland College, I considered that a sensitivity to practice would afford the greatest opportunity to meaningfully explore this under-researched area. By accepting that context and the practices enacted within them “are not, and cannot be, finally separable – each produces and locates the other in a complex interplay of socially produced knowledges, practices and relations of power” (Saltmarsh, 2009, p.160), PT opens up fresh opportunities to look at a site from a different perspective. This

renewed interest in practice – a *practice turn* – has heralded a new phase in social science research, with concern being directed towards practitioners' "knowing and learning in everyday activity" (Fenwick, 2012, p.4).

4.5 Practice Theory in Education

Whilst PT has gained credibility in a variety of research contexts since the practice turn, it has more recently begun to emerge within education research via "an amplification of interest in practice theory… particularly in relation to teaching and teacher education" (Mathewson Mitchell, 2013, p.414). This turn to practice for education has been welcomed by practice theorists, particularly Landri (2012). I concur with his assertion that education is itself an "embodied and materially mediated practice that occurs in a material organisation of space-time and unfolds through sociomaterial arrangements (texts, blackboards, benches, pencils, technologies, objects of knowledge and space, bodies, etc.)" (p.96). This particularly resonated with me and formed one of my earliest queries about the nature of HE teaching within an FE LBC and how the place might impact upon it, i.e. the classrooms, the hand-drawn posters of rodents and rabbits, the old overhead projectors, etc.; what role, if any, might they play in HE teacher practice enactment? My sensitivity towards considering materiality coincided with this turn to practice in education. It also coincided with a shift towards embracing notions of particularity and specificity, by virtue of every educational institution, department and discipline having its own unique characteristics; how things are understood and done are not generalisable (Bamber et al., 2009). Further, Blok (2011) suggests that all pedagogies are located within "particular conditions" (p.64). Thus, PT and its situated, site-specific orientation lent more weight to my assertion that such an approach was viable and, arguably, the only way in which to meaningfully explore HE teacher practice at Shireland College.

Crucially for this study, my own personal experience of HE in FE further justified my decision. Schatzki (2012) contends that in order for practices to be uncovered, there is an assumption that there is "experience with or knowledge of the bundles of which they are part" (p.10), including material artefacts. Indeed, Lafton (2012) proposes "discourse, materiality, and knowledge all constitute and carry practices and actions" (p.181). My direct experience and knowledge of the site (specifically gained via field-based research, as well as more broadly within the HE in FE LBC sector), the work that HE in FE teachers do, and my familiarity with discourse and material resources associated with HE animal/equine/veterinary nursing teaching, further strengthened my justification.

Finally, both Schwandt and Wilkinson validated my decision to turning to practice to explore HE teacher pedagogy. Schwandt (2005) claims that

> the practices of teaching, counseling, social work, administration and so on are not simply organized delivery mechanisms that provide services to clients seeking utilitarian ends. They are sites of human flourishing: it is in the interaction between teacher and student, counselor and patient, social worker and client that we become aware of what it means to be human, to live together, to prosper (and not just function). (p.330)

I took this central tenet of the social and the socialness of humans as being the primer required to move away from traditional scientific/discipline based knowledge traditions, which have historically enjoyed primacy when researching professional practice. Similarly, I aligned myself with Wilkinson et al. (2013) and their recommendation that "a practice-informed approach allows for deeper understandings of how patterns of practice such as the formation of teacher learning communities may be sustained, reproduced and/or transformed" (p.225). With this in mind, I reaffirm my argument that a practice-informed approach provided the best means of exploring HE teacher practice.

4.6 Schatzki – Practice and Site Ontology

It is widely accepted that the *turn to practice* acknowledged within contemporary social science is attributed to Schatzki's publication *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (2001) (with Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny). Within this *turn*, Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny (2001) had a fundamental belief that "knowledge, meaning, human activity, science power, language, social institutions and human transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the field of practices" (p.2), claiming that "features of human life must be understood as forms of or as rooted in human activity – not in the activity of individuals, but in practices, that is, in the organised activities of multiple people" (Schatzki, 2012, pp.1–2). In understanding human life, rather than blind rule following, "people do what makes sense for them to do" (Nicolini, 2012, p.163). Therefore, human action and practice should be viewed as being mindful and enacted in accordance with understanding of and attunement to existing conditions within a particular site (ibid.).

The 'site' is one of the hallmarks of Schatzki's version of PT. Rather than being simply a location where practices merely happen to take place, the site is theoretically vital, demanding to be "understood in existential and ontological terms as an actual and particular place where things happen, not just as a location in an abstract and universal matrix of space-time" (Kemmis et al., 2014b, p.215). Practices emerge in sites, giving a site meaning to those practitioners within, by virtue of a site being contextual. Defining a context as a "setting or backdrop that envelops and determines phenomena" (Schatzki, 2000, p.xiv), the character and composition of the practices and phenomenon within it are shaped by a particular context. Thus, whilst individuals perform enacted practices, the ways in which they are organised and prefigured is not attributed solely to individuals, but to the social site where such practices are played out (Hopwood, 2014). This shaping of practices, i.e. enablement or constraint within a context is known as prefigurement, and is developed over time.

Thus, for those within a particular site, meaning given to particular practices is as a result of a gradual layering of social interaction over time (Lloyd, 2010), creating both meaning to practice, as well as defining limits of acceptability.

Schatzki referred to individual classrooms as being a site with two dimensions: “a bundle of practices and material arrangements” (Schatzki, 2005, p.474). Importantly, Schatzki (2005) states that “[it] is not practices, on the one hand, and material arrangements on the other, but a mesh of practices and arrangements” (p.473). This meshing, referred to as “the site of the social” (Schatzki, 2002, xii), is explained by Schatzki (2001) as being “a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organised around shared particular understandings” (p.3).

Along with his notion of site and context, Schatzki is known for his ideas regarding site ontology, i.e. the view that social life is inextricably connected to a particular site via an ontology that “transcends rigid action-structure oppositions” (Schatzki, 2001, p.1). Rather than ascribing to individualist or societist ontological views whereby the social is either in the heads of people, or within disembodied social structures, a site ontology is something of a third way by acknowledging the role of people *and* places/structures within the realms of the social (Rajão, 2008). Schatzki (2010) asserts that social life is composed of a nexus of human practices and material arrangements within a site, thus creating “one immense transmogrifying web of practices and arrangements” (p.130). He defines practices as “organized spatial-temporal manifolds of human activity” (Schatzki, 2010, p.129), “embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organised round shared practical understanding” (Schatzki, 2001, p.2), understood as a “nexus of doings and sayings organised by understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures” (Schatzki, 1997, p.3).

For Schatzki, practices include sayings and doings that consist of discursive, bodily, material and social actions which, in combination, make up practice activities (Halkier, 2010). However, sayings and doings alone do not constitute practice. Rather, Schatzki defines practice as "a 'bundle' of activities, that is to say, an organized nexus of actions" (Schatzki, 2002, p.71), 'organized' by common rules and understandings, referred to by Schatzki (2002) as i) Practical understandings, i.e. "a skill or capacity that underlies activity" (p.79), ii) Rules, i.e. "explicit formulations, principles, precepts, and instructions that enjoin, direct, or remonstrate people to perform specific actions" (p.79), iii) Teleoaffective structures, i.e. "a range of normativized and hiercharchicly ordered ends, projects, and tasks, to varying degrees allied with normativized emotions and even mood" (p.80), and iv) General understandings, i.e. the overall purpose of the task whereby the activities which constitute the practice 'hang together' as a project.

These organised practices are then bundled up with material arrangements, by which Schatzki (2011) means "linked people, organisms, artifacts, and things of nature. Practices and arrangements bundle in that (1) practices effect, alter, use, and are inseparable from arrangements while (2) arrangements channel, prefigure, and facilitate practices" (p.4). Further, and crucially he comments that the mesh of practices and arrangements cohere within a site whereby "practices and orders enable and constrain one another" (Schatzki, 2002, p.117).

Schatzki offers a theoretical approach which views practice as being more than unconscious or subconscious bodily routine. Significantly, it is an approach that does not favour individual behaviour as explaining structures, nor structures explaining the behaviour of individuals. Rather, it ignores neither individuals nor structures, but assumes an ontological perspective, which cuts through traditional structure versus agency binaries to recognise practice as the fundamental unit of social analysis. In

recognising practice as a unit of social analysis, Schatzki (2013) confirms the role of people and material things with his confirmation that “human activity is inseparable from material arrangements, practice-arrangement bundles, and social phenomena” (p.12).

Whilst Schatzki’s view of practice and the site ontology resonated strongly, ultimately it was Kemmis and Grootenboer’s (2008) theory of Practice Architectures (PA) that I ultimately sensitised the study with. Adapting Schatzkian ideas regarding saying and doings, ontology and the site of the social, the justification for using PA is discussed in the following section.

4.7 Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008): The Theory of Practice Architectures

Practice Architectures (PA) has established itself as having particular relevance in education research. A growing number of studies concerning educational leadership, teacher professional development, teacher induction and mentoring have been produced using PA as a theoretical lens to view education in its broadest sense. Indeed, with specific reference to vocational tertiary education akin to that found within Shireland College, Brennan-Kemmis and Green (2013) remark how PA is “relevant to any discussion of current *VET [vocational education and training] pedagogy since it provides both a retrospective and prospective framework for analysing and understanding the factors that influence the work of teachers and trainers, and by definition their pedagogies“ (p.109).

Kemmis (2009) defines practice as “always embodied (and situated) – it is what particular people do, in a particular place and time, and it contributes to the formation of their identities as people of a particular kind, and their agency and sense of agency” (p.23). This mutual constitution between individuals and the social world in which they engage contributes not only to identity formation, but more broadly in

terms of individual self understanding and values. Thus, PA can be viewed in terms of framing and constructing individuals,

> constructing themselves in the terms made available to them by the practice architectures they inhabit…teachers are made the educators and teachers they come to be by complying with and also by resisting the particular practice architectures in which they live and work. (Kemmis, 2008, p.21)

In respect to its Schatzkian origins, Kemmis et al. (2014b) define practice as "socially established cooperative activity involving characteristic forms of understanding (sayings), modes of action (doings), and ways in which people relate to one another (relatings)" (p.31). The addition of 'relatings' is an extension of the sayings and doings as described by Schatzki, thus creating three dimensions of practice. The addition of relatings serves to convey the connection between practitioners and their own individual practice, as well as the fundamental sociality of relating both with humans and non-human material objects within specific practice enactments.

Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) are clear that practice is not merely knowledge application on the part of individuals. Rather, the emergent nature of practice means it evolves within a site and does not "come into existence by producing sayings, doings and relatings out of thin air" (Kemmis and Heikkinen, 2012, p.147). Kemmis (2012) contends that practices are "shaped not solely by the intentional action and practice knowledge of participants but also by circumstances and conditions, which are *external* to them" (p.887). Practice is dependent upon both the individual and extra-individual arrangements that are found within a site, thereby it

> draws upon existing possibilities: it is composed from existing *cultural-discursive arrangements* like the languages and specialist discourses that describe and justify the sayings that occur in particular practices; existing *material-economic arrangements* that make possible the doings – the activities – that compose the practice; and existing *social-political arrangements* that make possible the relatings that compose the practice. (Kemmis and Heikkinen, 2012, p.147)

These extra-individual arrangements are brought to a site, or are already there, historically laid down by those who have been there before. These arrangements and ways in which they are enmeshed together with practice in a particular site shapes practice (Mahon et al., 2017), creating characteristic sayings, doings and relatings which “shape dispositions and actions, both in the educator’s general response to a particular situation or setting, and in relation to their particular responses at particular moments” (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008, p.50). It is the particularity of these arrangements that make practice possible, thereby constituting the practice architectures for a particular site (Mahon et al., 2017).

The sayings, doings and relatings of a practice are always played out within three distinct dimensions of intersubjective space (McMahon et al., 2017), spaces which can trace their origins back to Habermasian ideas regarding language, work and power, and it is within these spaces where practices are conceptualised, expressed and understood. These intersubjective spaces include the semantic space dimension (where things can be said and understood, i.e. via language and thinking), the physical space-time dimension (where relevant activities can be done, i.e. work), and the social space dimension (where relating to others in an appropriate manner can occur, i.e. through power and solidarity) (Kemmis and Heikkinen, 2011).

The theory of PA places the individual practitioner on one ‘side’ of practice, and the site and its extra-individual ‘arrangements’ on the other, linked by interconnected intersubjective spaces where practice is enacted and understood by practitioners. In concert with Schatzki’s notion of practice being enacted within a site ontology, the role of the individual and the extra-individual arrangements cannot be considered as distinct and unconnected. Rather, they are dialectically related and are both required components of practice (Kemmis, 2009a) symbiotically existing through an emergent and dynamic push-pull relationship (Figure 3).

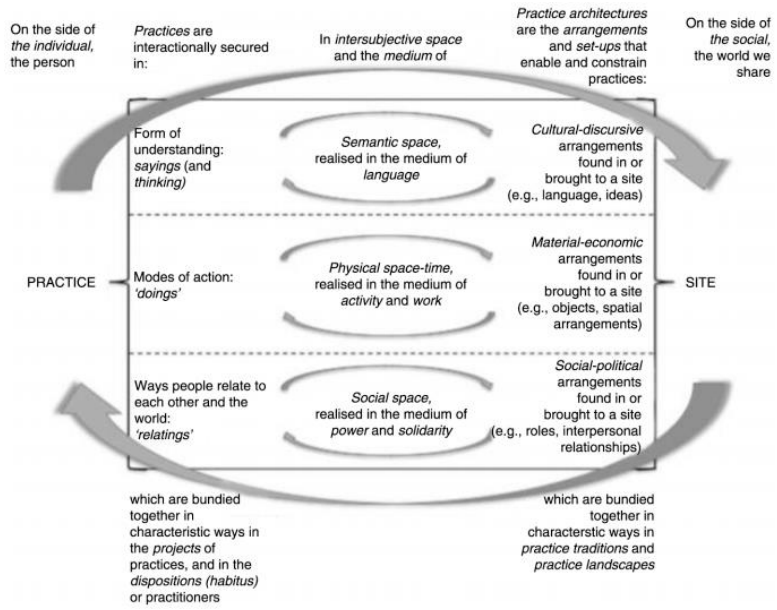

Figure 3. The theoretical framework of Practice Architectures (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008). Cited from Hemmings et al. (2013)

Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) are clear that whilst the extra-individual (cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political) arrangements of practice architectures prefigure, and can enable, constrain and hold practices in place, they do not predetermine practice (Meaney et al., 2009). The prefiguring potential of PA can be affected via the dynamic nature of individual practice. Practice involves social and individual facets, with a person possessing their own unique set of characeristics, behaviours and experiences. As Schatzki (2001) explained, "individuals, instead of effecting and sustaining norms, meaning, and language out of their own resources, are integrated (to varying degrees) into the ways of proceeding that characterize extant practices" (p.21). Whilst the potential of prefigurment to influence individual practice enactment should not be underplayed, it is the notion of 'varying degrees' to which an individuals 'own resources' can feature within the enactment of particular practices. Arguably, some teachers are likely to be better able to withstand prefiguring potential associated with particular practices in a site more readily than others. For example, an experienced teacher is likely to have been

exposed to a range of practices in their professional lives, e.g. an experienced teacher with PG qualifications, engaged in research, and who has worked in a number of LBCs may well be better equipped to counter aspects of practice prefigurement in a site when compared to an inexperienced teacher who has recently joined the profession. Their 'own resources' and exposure to a broad range of practices is likely to be less well developed, thereby affecting their ability to resist or challenge prefiguring potential.

Practices are not concrete and immutable. They can change or disappear in relation to those who are enacting the practice, and to the cultural-discursive, material-economic, and social-political arrangements that hold the practices in place within a given time and space. In this sense, practices can change from within a site, or as a consequence of practices travelling and being brought into a site from somewhere else (Kemmis et al., 2014b). Either way, this brings with it the potential for new practices to become established and new practice architectures to be made.

Kemmis (2006) remarks that practice architectures are "shaped through histories and traditions that locate practices in such a way that they are 'inherited' already formed, by contemporary practitioners, who in their turn, become the custodians and developers of practices" (p.2). With reference to a classroom, Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) contend that an empty room and the way it is arranged will act, to some extent, as a primer for prefiguring the teaching and learning practices which occur, "even before a particular practitioner arrives on the scene" (p.55). Reiterating the earlier assertion of Kemmis et al. (2014b) that PA arrangements are always in "a dance between reproduction and transformation" (p.3), the inference is that practice architectures have the potential both to keep practices in stasis, or to change them. However, the theory of practice architectures states that to change practice, changing the practices of individuals is not enough. Changes to the practice

architectures that enable and constrain practitioners' actions and interactions must also occur (Kemmis, 2008), thus highlighting the role of the site in shaping (HE) practice.

Kemmis (2008) suggests that when the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements lose fluidity they become "sedimented and institutionalised they [then] function as mediating preconditions for subsequent practice ... preconditions that pre-form what kinds of practice will be possible" (p.25). Indeed, Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) suggest that when working and relating in practice with others, lived relationships can become deeply sedimented to an extent that any sedimentation can "become invisible – taken for granted as 'the way things are'" (p.38).

The complexity of practice is further added to be the consideration of meta-practices and their role in individual teacher enactments at a particular site. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) define meta-practices as those beyond the extra-individual arrangements of a site, but which, like extra-individual arrangements, have the ability to shape the form and conduct of other practices. Examples include government *educational legislation,* Ofsted, validating university policies, the QAA etc. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) contend that practice architectures constitute "what is and can be actually said and done, by, with and for whom" (pp.57–58). This clearly indicates the power and significance of both meta-practices and extra-individual arrangements in predetermining practice enactments.

4.8 Sensitivity to Practice Architectures for the study

This chapter establishes that I considered PA as the most appropriate strand of PT for my study. The way in which PA was used was not to be an overt PA study whereby predefined avenues of exploration would be travelled using, that is, to specifically study the sayings, doings and relatings and extra-individual

arrangements of the site. The study was not designed with a testable hypothesis in mind. Given the under-researched nature of HE in FE pedagogy and teacher practice, using only PA as a theoretic framework would not enable the construction of new, substantive theoretical understandings to be made. The aspiration to construct theory would require adopting a GT approach (this is discussed in full in the next chapter). Therefore, PA was used to attune my awareness and to remind me "to notice and attend to" (Hopwood, 2016, p.119) sociomaterial aspects to enable me to "make visible the material dynamics in practice situations" (Fenwick and Nimmo, 2015, p.67), as well as the research participants. Sensitivity to people and things, what they did and what they said within the site of Shireland College was how a PT-sensitive dimension was used within the study.

4.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has sought to justify the adoption of a sensitised PT approach particularly drawing on the theory of PA as described by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008). Fundamentally, I have sought to assert how this is an innovative and contemporary approach to exploring people and practices within an education institution. Significantly, it is a method that, in concert with GT, would enable me to attain philosophical and methodological congruence with both my study aims and my research question. The following chapter will discuss the principles of GT, as well as the rationale for adopting a modified CGT approach as espoused by Charmaz for this study.

Chapter 5: Grounded Theory Literature Review

5.1 History and philosophy of Grounded Theory

This discussion provides a justification for using a CGT methodology as a means of collecting and interpreting data in order to theorise teacher practice enactments. It describes how the union of a sensitivity to practice and a CGT methodology provided both philosophical and methodological congruence for this study. Further, it discusses my own philosophical positioning and its congruence with adopting CGT. This discussion foregrounds the following Methodology chapter (Chapter 6), where the specifics regarding methods and the actualities of data collection are articulated.

In order to give greater context to the use of a CGT methodology, I briefly outline some of the key underlying tenets of Grounded Theory (GT), with particular reference to its origins and its evolutionary trajectory since its creation in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss with their ground breaking text *The Discovery of Grounded Theory.* Prior to this, "positivism still had great influence and this permeated the social sciences: qualitative research was seen as the poor relation to numerical quantitative approaches" (Tolhurst, 2012, para.6), with qualitative researchers often labelled as being "soft scientists" whose work was "unscientific, only exploratory, or subjective" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.2). Indeed, in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) lamented how qualitative work was, "either not theoretical enough or the theories were too 'impressionistic'" (p.15). This concern voiced by Glaser and Strauss was done so against a backdrop of challenge against the historically dominant hypothetico-deductive, positivistic, quantitative research traditions (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013) which began to gather pace during the 1960s. During this time there was a significant shift in thinking within the social sciences, with the beginnings of divergence from the positivism historically associated with classical social scientists, towards a social science where meanings were, "constructed, negotiated and managed by different individuals and groups

within various social and historical contexts" (Broom and Willis, 2007, p.24). This shift was taking place during one of the 'moments' in qualitative research as identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). Beginning with the *Traditional Period* (pre-WWII) and currently represented (2008 onwards) as the *Fractured Future*, Glaser and Strauss's GT emerged during the *Modernist* moment (post-WWII – 1970) (p.629), when notions that objectivity and hypothesis testing in order that the neutral researcher can find the 'truth' (Newby, 2014), was making way for new approaches where, "the personal is political, that the subjective is a valid form of knowledge…and that all people are capable of naming their own world and constructing knowledge" (Ryan, 2006, p.17).

To respond to the criticism of qualitative research being 'soft' and 'unscientific', Glaser and Strauss developed GT as "an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data" (Martin and Turner, 1986, p.141). A key premise of GT is that of emergence. Charmaz (2008a) suggests that "grounded theory is predicated on an emergent logic… emergent method as inductive, indeterminate, and open-ended. An emergent method begins with the empirical world and builds an inductive understanding of it as events unfold and knowledge accrues" (p.155). She continues the theme of emergence with her assertion that "the comparative and interactive nature of grounded theory at every stage of analysis distinguishes grounded theory from other approaches and makes it an explicitly emergent method" (ibid, p.163).

With a dual heritage of both symbolic interactionism from Strauss, and positivism from Glaser (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009), the resulting methodology aimed to close "the embarrassing gap between theory and empirical research" (Glaser and

Strauss, 1967, p.vii), and to “identify something that lies in the empirical field waiting to be discovered” (Åge, 2011, p.1608).

At this juncture it is worth providing a brief definition of symbolic interactionism, particularly given that the “relationship between classical Grounded Theory and the interpretive tradition of Symbolic Interactionism is strong and historical” (Aldiabat and Le Navenec, 2011, p.1063). Entitled *Symbolic Interactionism* by Blumer (1969) (based upon earlier works of his tutor, Mead), it is a means of studying social interaction based up three underlying principles, namely:

- Humans act towards things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things.
- The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society.
- These meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters (Blumer, 1969, p.2).

Essentially, these principles contend that people interact socially on the basis under which such interactions have meaning for them, with the origins of such meanings being via social interaction (Ashwin, 2009). Significantly, meanings can change through self-interpretation, thus an individual can “suspend, regroup or transform meanings” (Pascale, 2011, p.88). The resultant interaction of these three elements is in the “formation of propositions about relationships or shared meanings” (Sidwell Sipes, 2002, p.155). This understanding of meaning enables people to understand the intentions of others, as this understanding will indicate that other people within the setting can understand the gestures and symbols used, thus enabling them to respond accordingly “on the basis of his or her internal understanding of the meaning

of the behavior, which is derived from past interactions and anticipated future interactions" (Milliken and Schreiber, 2012, p.692).

Given that GT is "an important method for studying topics of a social nature" (Jones and Alony, 2011, p.3), its symbolic interactionism ancestry helps give it distinctiveness as a methodological approach by virtue of how it "translates and discovers new understandings of human beings behaviours that are generated from the meaning of symbols" (Aldiabat and Le Navenec, 2011, p.1072). Crucially for this study, the symbolic interactionism underpinning resonated particularly well in relation to the exploration of an essentially social site, i.e. Shireland College, and the 'sayings, doings and relatings' that reflected the practices of those within it. Given that symbolic interactionism contends that meanings can be modified, and that individuals actively shape, and are shaped by their environment, I considered that it fused well with the notion of practices being dynamic.

5.2 GT variations

At the time of publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, the premise of an inductive enquiry was in complete contrast to the tradition of deductive enquiry, whereby research problems were initially identified in the literature, with the associated theory being subjected to scrutiny in order to be proved or disproved (Elliott and Higgins, 2012). Classic GT was clearly situated within the realm of objectivity and realism, given the language of 'discovery' of a theory, and Glaser's recognition of there being an "objective reality that can be observed" (Nathaniel, 2012, p.303). Charmaz (2008b) supported this view by emphasising that classic GT focused on, "generality, not relativity, and objectivity, not reflexivity" (p.399).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) clearly articulated what the key determinants of a GT should contain:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis

- Construction of analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses
- Use of constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis
- Advancement of theory development during each step of data collection and analysis
- Memo writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps
- Sampling aimed towards theory construction, not for population representativeness
- Conducting the literature review *after* developing an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006, pp.5–6).

Idrees et al. (2011) comment that in addition to these stages, the original Glaser and Strauss (1967) model includes theoretical sampling, "where data collection is driven by the emerging theory" (p.3). Following theoretical saturation, whereby "additional analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new about a category" (Strauss, 1987 p.21), the product of the GT endeavour is that of either substantive or formal theory. Sengstock (2015) defines substantive theory as theory that is relevant to the place from where the data was collected, and Glaser and Strauss (1967) define formal theory as being "developed for a formal or conceptual area" (p.33).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocated a two-stage coding process: "substantive and theoretical" (Mansourian, 2006, p.391), and asserted that "joint collection, coding and analysis of data is the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process… should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end" (p.43).

One of the most debated topics in the use of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) GT is that of the use of literature, with their directive to examine literature *after* data gathering. Their original thesis argued that a researcher should have 'theoretical sensitivity' by virtue of having "theoretical insight into his area of research, combined with an ability to make something of his insights" (p.67). This insight should not be confused with preconceived theories or ideas regarding the research area. Rather, as asserted by Glaser (1978), researchers should "remain sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases" (p.3).

This position was one from which Strauss later distanced himself, a move that was instrumental in precipitating the formation of a schism between the two researchers. Strauss subsequently teamed up with Juliet Corbin and published *Basics of Qualitative Research* (1990), whereby they sought to develop GT with a far more prescribed set of coding categories (open, axial and selective) (Heath and Cowley, 2004), and protocols by which to guide the researcher through the method. In addition, Strauss and Corbin disputed the principle of refraining from undertaking a literature review in advance of a study, with an articulation of their position between an "open mind" versus an "empty mind" (Jones and Alony, 2011, p.99).

A further and significant divergence was that of verification. Whilst Glaser asserted that GT was non-verifiable, that theory could only be verified after its development, Strauss and Corbin contended that verification should be a continuous process via examination of the data throughout (Bulawa, 2014). Known today as Straussian GT, Glaser "repudiated their approach", accusing them of "forcing data into preconceived categories" (Ritzer and Ryan, 2010, p.272) and of undermining classic GT tenets. The rift led to the original Glaser and Strauss version of GT being appropriated as Glaserian GT as a means of identifying their different orientations. The split between

the originators has subsequently led to the development of different forms, with Keane (2014) suggesting that currently, “three ‘schools’ can be discerned: the Glaserian ‘classical’ school, the Strauss and Corbin school and more recently, the Constructivist school” (p.3).

This evolution away from the original, classic GT has created debate as to whether it has been “eroded or evolved” (Bluff, 2005, p.165) as a result. Indeed, there are concerns from some quarters that, in contrast to the original aim of GT to develop “empirically grounded middle-range theories” (Peters, 2014, p.6), researchers lay claim to using GT, but do not do “anything that would be recognizable as such even when using the most inclusive definition of the term” (Hood, 2007, pp.151–152). Further criticism has been voiced by Kanyangale and Pearce (2012), who caution novice researchers with regard to the confusion that using the method can present.

Despite the perceived weaknesses and caveats regarding the use of GT, Skeat and Perry (2008) are clear that “grounded theory is considered to be an appropriate choice for a research study when a phenomenon has not been adequately described, or when there are few theories that explain it” (p.97). GT is also proposed for producing theory that is based upon the complexities of real-life practice and experience, with sensitivity to practitioners within their setting (Barnett, 2012). Furthermore, Bluff (2005) suggests “like many other types of qualitative studies sample size in grounded theory research can vary but tends to be small” (p.151). Indeed, its use as a qualitative methodology remains widespread within a range of disciplines, with Chong and Yeo (2015) asserting that “grounded theory is increasingly popular in a broad range of research primarily in educational research” (p 258). Given its broad use within education research and extensive literature base, coupled with its general focus upon “social processes or actions: they ask about *what*

happens and *how people interact" (*Wiersma and Jurs, 2005, p.2*),* I considered that the decision to use a GT methodology for this study was justified.

5.3 Considering Thematic Analysis

Given the existence of three aforementioned schools, the potential dilemma facing researchers is centred upon which school to ally oneself with. Critical reflection and evaluation of my own philosophical orientation disclosed that only one could be viewed as being a viable proposition; Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT). Before I present my rationale, I believe it is pertinent at this juncture to divert briefly to the topic of thematic analysis as a means of strengthening my decision to adopt a CGT methodology, after which I will return to my justification for selecting a CGT approach, along with providing an articulation of my philosophical position with regard to my study.

Prior to making the decision to adopt CGT, part of my thinking led me to consider, but ultimately reject, thematic analysis as a means of interpreting my data. Like GT, thematic analysis provided a well-trodden path through qualitative research studies. Thematic analysis is predicated upon the researcher deciding what themes to look for *in advance* of data collection, resulting in the selection of data relevant to each of the pre-identified themes prior to analysis (Ayano, 2006). Given the under-researched nature of my study and the desire to stay true to the emergent nature of grounded theory, I concluded that thematic analysis would not afford me sufficient scope to deal with the complexity of the study. Howitt and Cramer (2010) differentiate thematic analysis from GT with regard to the role of theory, namely that "grounded theory is intended as a way of generating theory which is closely tied to the data" (p.336), whilst Ayano (2006) asserts that in comparison to thematic analysis, GT includes "a higher level of analysis" (p.34). I argue that the higher level of analysis expounded by Ayano (2006) is arrived at by virtue of theoretical sampling. Unlike

thematic analysis, which does not include theoretical sampling, the iterative nature of GT data analysis, with subsequent analysis driving the collection of further data (Ezzy, 2002), made it an approach which gave greater depth to the resultant interpretation and analysis. The inclusion of this defining feature of GT also strengthened the claims and assertions made within my study, thus helping to move it beyond being “an account of some key themes in the data, with brief contextual quotes in illustration, and sceptical readers remain unconvinced that qualitative analysis is anything other than journalistic reportage” (Green, 1998, p.1064).

Aside from methodological considerations, further reasoning for using CGT was arrived at by virtue of its inclusion adding to the originality of my study. Deemed by Gelling and Rodriguez Borrego (2014) as being a “major ingredient of doctoral research in every discipline... doctoral students are required to demonstrate how they have contributed new knowledge to their discipline” (p.6), I considered that the inclusion of a CGT methodology would strengthen my claim to have been original in my quest to add to the literature corpus for HE in FE.

5.4 Philosophical and methodological congruence

Mills et al. (2006) state that “to ensure a strong research design, researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality” (p.2). In order to achieve a congruent and logical methodology, my critical reflections led me to consider my philosophical stance in order that subsequent methods for gathering and interpreting my data would be robust, and would do justice to the participants in my study. Given my desire to conduct research within a specific situation with a particular group of participants, a qualitative approach locating “the observer in the world” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.3) in order to “generate a close yet contextually embedded rendering of an understudied activity” (Seaman, 2008, p.6) was concluded to be most appropriate. In order to create a

methodological framework to enable me to achieve this, I sought to ensure I considered all of the GT variations available, as they "exist on a methodological spiral and reflect their epistemological underpinnings" (Mills et al., 2006, p.2).

5.5 Philosophical positioning – ontology, epistemology and axiology

In order to focus my thinking about the relative epistemological underpinnings of the grounded theory variants, I was compelled to follow the advice of Austin and Sutton (2014) with their insistence that all researchers must begin their studies by clearly articulating their worldview. As part of this process, I used Crotty (1998) and his four elements framework to initially help me focus my thinking. Crotty (1998) proposes that a researcher's epistemology informs the theoretical perspective (or paradigm), which in turn informs the methodology and the method. I considered paradigm to be beliefs and principles that "represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.107).

I considered paradigm within the realms of both ontology and epistemology, adopting the definition of Gray (2014), i.e. that ontology "embodies what is…the study of being… the nature of existence and what constitutes reality" (p.19), whereas epistemology is "concerned with the origin, nature, limits, methods, and justification of human knowledge" (Hofer, 2000, p.4); more simply, "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p.8). Being aware of one's epistemology and its impact upon research is key, because methodology justifies the method, which in turn produces data and subsequent interpretation and analyses, thus ensuring that epistemology "modifies methodology and justifies the knowledge produced" (Carter and Little, 2007, p.1317).

Using Crotty's framework in which to consider and frame my own position, my 'elements' were defined as aligning with:

- a constructivist epistemology
- an interpretivist theoretical perspective
- a grounded theory methodology
- methods predominantly including interviews and non-participant observations.

Further reading and closer reflection on myself lead me to declare my philosophical research stance as being interpretivist and constructivist, both of which I conclude to be most appropriate, particularly given that my research question focused upon the subjective views and experiences of my participants and as such, “interpretive research is about subjectivity and complexity. It seeks not necessarily to count or reduce, but to represent rich, subjective experience” (Broom and Willis, 2007, p.26).

In terms of ontological considerations, I align myself to relativism, as I believe that reality is subjective. As such “realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions… local and specific, dependant for their form and content on the persons who hold them” (Guba, 1990, p.27). This is in contrast to realism, whereby reality is considered in terms of the “existence of a real, physical world that is external to individuals and includes human experience” (Schuh and Barab, 2008, p.71).

With regard to my axiological position, i.e. values and ethics, I am in concert with Broido and Manning (2002) who maintain that the research process can “never be independent of the researcher’s or respondents’ assumptions” (p.439). Indeed, Lichtman (2009) suggests it is “neither possible or desirable for researchers to keep their values from influencing aspects of the research study” (p.25). Unlike a positivist, view where research is “value free and unbiased” (Klenke, 2008, p.17), I acknowledged and embraced the value-laden axiology associated with interpretivist research methodology. A result of my “personal history and research experiences” (ibid.), I took the view that my arguments would be given greater weight by

considering and incorporating my experience of the specific HE in FE LBC context (rather than ignoring or bracketing it), as well as using my personal values when making value judgements about the participants in my study (Taylor, 2005).

5.6 The rationale for adopting a modified constructivist grounded theory approach

Given my interpretivist, constructivist and relativist position, aligning myself with either Glaser and Strauss model or Strauss and Corbin model, was not going to enable me to achieve a sense of philosophical and methodological congruence. With its objectivist position, Glaserian GT was not compatible with that of my own (Taghipour, 2014). As proposed by Keane (2014), "classical grounded theory explicitly focuses on conceptualisation rather than the full coverage and 'thick' descriptions of participants' lived experiences" (p.12). Given my aim to give a voice to the specific experiences of my participants, I felt this focus of conceptualisation was at odds with my position.

Charmaz (2008b) comments that classic GT emphasises "generality not relativity, and objectivity, not reflexivity" (p.399). Given that my study was focused upon a single site, choosing a GT to assist me in understanding particularity and specificity, rather than generality, precluded considering Glaserian GT for my study. Arguably, the version espoused by Strauss and Corbin is more sympathetic to an interpretivist standpoint by refuting the notion of a "pre-existing reality 'out there.' To think otherwise is to take a positivistic position that ... we reject .... Our position is that truth is enacted" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p.279). However, they use the language of objectivity when stating, "we emphasize that it is not possible to be completely free of bias" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.97). They continue in a similar vein by suggesting that "what is important is to recognize that subjectivity is an issue and that researchers should take appropriate measures to minimize its intrusion into their analyses" (p.43). Finally, Charmaz (2006) suggests that the Strauss and Corbin

model is known both “for its rigor and usefulness, but also for its positivistic assumptions” (Charmaz, 2006, p.9). Given the positions of Glaser and Strauss, and of Strauss and Corbin respectively, coupled with the lack of congruence with my own, I adopted CGT as I believed it aligned most favourably with both my own philosophical stance, and the aim of my study, i.e. to construct new theoretical understandings in an under-researched area.

A significant aspect of the decision to accept Charmaz as my guide was that her work resonated strongly with me. Walsham (2006) talks of researchers and how their own experiences, background and interests play a part in the process of choosing theories or concepts. He suggests how a particular theory can ‘speak’ to a researcher, commenting that “the authors then had to justify that choice in their papers by arguing how it was relevant to the research topic and the field data, but nevertheless the choice was their own” (p.324). This demonstration of how strongly particular literature can impact upon a researcher very much mirrors my own when reading Charmaz.

I also established that Charmaz’s GT would be particularly useful for my attention of sayings, doings and relatings in relation to practice within a specific site within a niche area of UK HE, given how Seaman (2008) suggests that GT works well when exploring both “sociocultural activities that have received little attention” (p.14) and “research in activity” (p.7).

5.7 Charmaz’s Constructivist Grounded Theory

A student of Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz immediately ‘spoke to me’ as *the* definitive version of GT for a number of reasons. The actualities of the procedural steps and processes I undertook are in the following Methodology chapter. This part of the thesis focuses on justifying its inclusion within my study, and articulating ways in which I adopted an abbreviated version.

Unlike classic GT, Charmaz developed her version throughout two later 'moments' in qualitative research as known as *Blurred Genres* (1970–1986) and *Crisis of Representation* (mid 1980s to early 1990s)" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p.629). During these moments, Birks and Mills (2011) explain how qualitative researchers began to "question their place in research texts" (p.6) with a marked increase in the influence and import of constructivist thinking. I consider this to be a significant factor in gravitating towards Charmaz, as I reflected that CGT offered the best 'fit' with me and with my study. Primarily, I felt that her philosophical position, her stance on the role of the researcher, and her ideas regarding *emergence* as opposed to theory *discovery* resonated strongly. Given the dramatic shifts in the moments of qualitative research from those which had influenced Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz's (2006) GT provided me with "twenty first century methodological assumptions and approaches" (p.9), to be able to synthesise my data into new theoretical conceptions via an "interpretive portrayal of the studied world" (p.10).

Mills et al. (2006) comment that CGT is "ontologically relativist and epistemologically subjectivist, constructivist grounded theory reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants in the research process and in doing so brings to the fore the notion of the researcher as author" (p.6). This stance clearly aligned with my own philosophical position. The notion of me, the researcher, being an integral part of the process, of creating "interpretative renderings of a reality rather than objective reports of it" (Lee, 2015, p.183), via a process of mutual construction "by the researcher and the researched" (Charmaz, 2011, p.169) particularly drew me towards Charmaz. Similarly, her opposition to Glaser and Strauss and the notion of theory being *out there* waiting to be discovered, instead insisting that the researcher lets the key issues emerge "rather than to force them into preconceived categories" (Charmaz, 1995, p.47) proved to be a further factor which drew me towards Charmaz.

Charmaz (2006) also contends that “we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices” (p.10). When adopting CGT, Mills et al.(2006) assert that the researcher must clarify the position that they, as author, takes in the text, whilst being open about their interest and experience by acknowledging “the relevance of biography” (ibid., 2006, p.9). Again, this was in tune with my own stance and assumptions. Rather than bracketing off or denying my own history, assumptions or experiences (Fischer, 2009), through my own reflexivity (as discussed in Chapter 3), I sought to acknowledge and engage with subjectivity, i.e. my experiences, life history and preconceptions, but “subjecting them to rigorous scrutiny” (Charmaz, 2008b, p.402) when co-constructing a GT with my research participants, as Charmaz (2014) advocates. Furthermore, I also believe that the nature of my research question fitted well with Charmaz. Indeed, Charmaz (2008a) suggests that her approach to GT is well-suited to addressing *why* questions. The notions of social practice and activity tied up in my research question also added weight to my justification for adopting Charmaz, with her more intuitive initial and focused coding framework and emphasis on coding using gerunds to “capture actions or processes” (Sbaraini et al., 2011, p.5).

In contrast to Glaser and Strauss (1967), who contended that grounded theorists should “ignore the literature” (p.46) prior to undertaking a GT study, Hernandez and Andrews (2012) describe how constructivist models do advocate some review of the literature, in order to assess current/historical work area and research study issues can be identified. In an approach of abduction, i.e. “considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, framing hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data and pursuing the most plausible explanation” (Charmaz, 2006, p.188), Charmaz advocates employing

‘sensitising concepts’ to provide researchers with "points of departure from which to study the data" (Charmaz, 2003, p.259). When coupled with researcher reflexivity, I considered this ability to consider the literature as adding strength to the CGT approach.

5.8 Abbreviated Constructivist Grounded Theory

Having provided a justification for adopting a CGT approach for my study, I conclude by presenting my rationale for using an abbreviated version of GT. I contend that this decision is vindicated when Strauss (1987) emphasised that modification of GT methods was acceptable, when stating that, ”methods, too, are developed and change in response to changing work contexts ... study them, use them, but modify them in accordance with the requirements of your own research. Methods, after all, are developed and changed in response to changing work contexts” (p.8).

With this permission in mind, I discovered that modified and abridged methodologies, particularly for tightly bound PhD studies, were often pragmatic strategies utilised in the light of time and resource restrictions. Indeed, Moriaty (2011) expressed how PhD studies increasingly used modified GT approaches, whilst still being able to generate rich data and insight (Willig, 2008).

Researching a very small site, I used every eligible participant (six lecturers who taught both FE and HE animal/equine/veterinary nursing) within my initial data collection phase. Therefore there were no additional participants with whom I could undertake any further theoretical sampling. In GT the usual protocol would involve theoretically sampling with *new* participants following initial rounds of coding and memoing. I was only able to use data from one group of participants. Refinement of my tentative categories was facilitated by constant comparison on an *intra*-participant basis, i.e. returning to the same participants for a second in-depth interview, with questions to follow up on comments/issues identified during the first in-depth

interview. Questions were also based upon issues and queries raised as a result of my field notes and memos from classroom teaching observations, informal college walkabouts, and informal conversations with senior HE leaders, students and general staff based at the college. Acknowledging limitations, i.e. the potential for some categories not to be fully saturated (Yurdakul et al., 2009), I maintain that I mititated against this by closely adhering to the principles of ensuring trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) espoused by Guba and Lincoln (1989) throughout my study. In particular, my engagement in the field, my use of observations, my own reflexivity, my use of peer de-briefing and my inclusion of negative cases all contributed towards developing a modified GT approach which provided opportunity for rich and insightful data to be gathered and interpreted. In addition, I followed the recommendation of Willig (2008) to use line-by-line coding to provide analytic depth in order to compensate for any lack of breadth, which can result when using only the original data set.

5.9 Chapter summary

This chapter has sought to justify the adoption of a modified CGT approach within this study. Fundamentally, I have justified how this approach methodologically complemented a study of people and practices. Affording philosophical and methodological congruence with my study aims and research question, I believe I have articulated my rationale for using a modified GT approach as espoused by Charmaz. Given that my research goal is to explain “how social circumstances could account for the interactions, behaviours and experiences of the people being studied” (Benoliel, 1996, p.413), the use of such an approach is entirely apposite.

The following Methodology chapter details the methods and procedures involved in the data collection process, as well as the rationale for adopting a single case study approach.

Chapter 6: Methodology and Working with Data

6.0 Introduction

The methodology was conceived in order to gather sufficient empirical data to enable me to answer my research question, as well as to remain faithful to CGT tenets and sensitive to notions of practice as espoused by Kemmis and Grootenboer, and Schatzki. It was also designed to take into account the specificity and particularity of that site in order to "do justice to the integrity of unique cases" (Patton, 2002, p.546) in an under-researched area. Within this chapter I discuss what methods and methodological approaches I adopted and my rationale for doing so. I discuss how I managed the process of condensing data in order to arrive at the final categories, which were constructed after iterative rounds of GT memoing and coding. This describes some of the challenges I encountered throughout the entire process from research design to coding and categorising. The chapter concludes with the presentation of these four core categories as a means of prefacing the interpretive analysis in Chapter 7.

6.1 Methodological mixing

The methodology for this study was created in order that it should be congruent in terms of providing synergy between philosophical assumptions, paradigm and methods, recruitment of participants and ways of interpreting data (Morse et al., 2002). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) describe methodology as being a bridge linking philosophical stance and research method, whilst Cutcliffe and Harder (2012) suggest that any inconsistency or incongruence between the elements, which comprise a methodology, can have a deleterious effect upon the quality and impact of the study. With this in mind, I sought to be discerning in my selection of methods and approaches as a means of mititating against accusations of incongruence or illogicality. Nagel et al. (2015) urge doctoral researchers to work within a methodological framework which resonates with their philosophical values. This

struck me as being significant, not only on a philosophical level, but also on a practical one. The idea of undertaking a study using a methodology I did not believe in, nor felt capable or competent to use would not be a situation with which I could readily reconcile.

Significantly for this study, I took Schatzki's (2011) counsel that to understand pedagogic practices I would have to so by "uncovering and studying their details" (p.24). I also considered the embodied nature of practice in terms of practices *in actu* (Hopwood, 2014), whilst looking to Fenwick and Edwards (2013) to remind me to acknowledge and to pay attention to the material aspects of practice, i.e. that buildings, posters on walls, module handbooks, tables and chairs within classrooms, whiteboards, college policies and riding arenas were all material things not merely inert, background items. Their presence within a site can act in concert with other things (primarily human actors) to "exclude, invite, and order particular forms of participation in enactments" (p.53). This was echoed by Kemmis who advised against observing practice enactments "without attention to the wider conditions which form and inform them" (Green, 2009, p.44).

Being a CGT study, I followed guidance from Charmaz (2006) and her appeal to direct specific attention to language, as well as emphasising a focus upon practice, action and process, rather than providing a mere description of events. In addition, I followed GT protocol by undertaking "simultaneous data collection and analysis" (Charmaz, 2011, p.165) and the constant comparative method throughout the data collection period.

Within this chapter I describe the methods adopted, and their synergy with my philosophical position and my research question. My focus on gathering data using a range of sources and methods was inspired by Charmaz (2006), who suggested that rich and diverse data make the "world appear anew" (p.14). Given the under-

researched nature of HE pedagogic practice within FE, this is significant, as I wished to do justice to my participants in order that new insights into HE in FE pedagogic practice could be gained.

This chapter also describes methods used to gain access to the research site and ethical considerations. Critically, I present my stance on reflexivity, both in terms of its significance, and in terms of the practical and pragmatic steps taken to maintain reflexivity throughout both the data collection period and the entire research process. Caelli et al.(2003) suggest how there should be sufficient detail regarding the methodological approach to enable readers to appropriately evaluate the ensuing research output. With this in mind, and taken as a measure to ensure quality through transparency, I have endeavoured to write this chapter to make plain my thinking and reasoning for adopting particular approaches from a critically evaluative stance. The process of simultaneously gathering and analysing data in accordance with Charmaz's CGT is fully explained in sub-section 6.7.1 of this chapter, whereas my interpretive analysis of the research data is discussed in Chapter 7.

The first part of the chapter is organised in accordance with the guidance proffered by Morrow (2005) who recommends using the following sub-sections to present and justify the methodology:

- Philosophy
- Position (researcher-as-instrument)
- Research Design
- Participants
- Sources of data.

6.2 Philosophy

Philosophy is a key facet of a social science study, a component that plays a central role in initiating and orchestrating methodological thinking and subsequent action and direction. Creswell (2013) argues that we all have philosophical assumptions, beliefs and ingrained views, whether we are aware of them or not. Our assumptions and positions exist, and they need to be interrogated, acknowledged and decisions made as to how to best work with, and manage them within the research process.

Cameron (2011) proposes that "one of the first tasks a researcher needs to undertake is to position themselves paradigmatically' (p.99), whilst Mills et al. (2006) contend that to create a robust research design "researchers must choose a research paradigm that is congruent with their beliefs about the nature of reality" (p.2). To enable alignment with any particular philosophical research tradition, I explored ideas of paradigms with a view to allying myself with one, which would enable me to achieve the philosophical and methodological congruence I sought to attain. Crucially, I sought a paradigm that would fit with the philosophical tenets of both PT and CGT, owing to my contention that a strong fit between these corresponding philosophical dimensions would positively contribute to a robust and credible methodological approach.

6.2.1 Paradigms

In Chapter 3 I discussed my epiphany with regard to gaining philosophical clarity and direction as a result of conducting my pilot study. I further outlined my paradigmic positioning in Chapter 5. Without wishing to go over earlier areas of this thesis, I intend only to restate key positions to preface the discussion of the methodological approaches used. As such, this study was situated within the interpretivist paradigm, a position that harmonized with my personal stance and cohered around PT and CGT. The assumption of a position whereby social reality is socially constructed, as

opposed to being a reality *out there* that is fixed and objective (Schutt, 2015) connects with Charmaz's CGT perspective, which "emphasizes diverse local worlds, multiple realities and the complexities of particular worlds, views and actions" (Creswell, 2007, p.65). Indeed, as Charmaz herself comments, her constructivist model of GT sits "squarely in the interpretive tradition" (Charmaz, 2006, p.330). Further, Charmaz (2012) proposes that an interpretive stance equips GT researchers with the tools to answer *why* questions. Clearly, having the ability to ask *why* questions was a primary goal for my research, given that understanding of the site and the participants was a key driver. Therefore, an interpretive paradigm was selected to enable the mutual knowledge construction "by the viewer and viewed aims towards interpretive understanding of subject's meaning" (Charmaz, 2000, p.510).

6.2.2 Qualitative and naturalistic enquiry

Central to an interpretivist approach, Yilmaz (2013) contends that capturing the experiences of research participants can only be achieved when the researcher is present within the setting, on hand to observe and to experience their every day lives and practices. This is shared by Schatzki (2012) with his view that, to study practice, "there is no alternative to hanging out with, joining in with, talking to and watching, and getting together the people concerned" (p.25). Further, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) insist how a multi-method approach whereby rich representations of the field via, "field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self" (p.5) are essential. Therefore I contend that a qualitative, naturalistic methodological approach afforded a paradigmic and philosophical fit with both CGT and with PT. Despite my unequivocal argument for the applicability of qualitative and naturalistic enquiry, there are criticisms associated with the approach. The following sections outline perceived limitations of such an approach, as well as offering a defence of it.

6.2.3 Criticism of interpretivism and qualitative research

Despite my conviction that a qualitative, naturalistic methodological approach was entirely apposite for this study, it is not free from criticism. Green and Thorogood (2004) describe how critics accuse it of being anecdotal and unscientific, whilst Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2004) argue that by virtue of its focus on "small, nonrandom samples…qualitative research findings are often not very generalisable beyond the local research participant" (p.410).

6.2.4 Criteria for quality within an interpretivist study

I offer a response and rejection of these criticisms. Fundamentally, the criteria for evaluating research, e.g. reliability and validity, is based upon research from the positivist tradition (Golafshani, 2003). Positivists see validity and reliability as being the *gold standard* for evaluating truth and accuracy in quantitative research, along with objectivity and generalisability (Savin-Badin and Howell Major, 2013). However, these are at odds with research in the interpretivist paradigm. Where the existence of an external reality is rejected, and where the human, local, site specific particularity is favoured over large scale repeatability and generalisability, adhering to criteria of internal validity, reliability, generalisability (external validity) and objectivity is inappropriate. This does not mean that no rigour or attention to quality was paid to the research process. Rather, I followed guidance from Guba and Lincoln (1994) and from Charmaz (2006) to ensure that trustworthiness and rigour (the benchmarks for quality in qualitative research) were considered within my methodological thinking and subsequent research design and analysis:

a) Credibility (in preference to internal validity)

b) Transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability)

c) Dependability (in preference to reliability)

d) Confirmability (in preference to objectivity) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.114).

In addition to credibility, Charmaz (2006) has three further criterion for assuring trustworthiness and rigour, those of originality (e.g. Does the work provide new or refined conceptual renderings?); resonance (e.g. Does the work portray the fullness of the studied experience?); and usefulness (e.g. How does the work contribute to knowledge and making a better world?) (pp.182–183).

I adopted "a systematic process systematically followed" (Patton, 2002, p.546), which included a multi-method approach, with sustained engagement with participants, persistent and detailed formal and informal field observations, extended participant interviewing, writing "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p.312) and carefully tracking and maintaining an audit trail to illustrate my thinking and decision making (Morrow, 2005). All of these criteria were considered and facilitated through my attention to my own reflexivity, i.e. my own reactions to the study, my philosophical position and location within the study (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010).

6.2.5 Paradigmic and personal positioning

Having identified interpretivism as my preferred paradigm in which to orientate my study, I confirm how this broad position related to my personal philosophical orientation.

6.2.6 Researcher-as-instrument

Being a study about people and practice and following Guba and Lincoln (2005, p.196), I maintain that my position as being a "passionate participant" (rather than a

detached, objective observer/reporter) fundamentally complemented the research aims and the broader philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of interpretivism, CGT and PT. Within this study I assumed the role of being the instrument for data collection and analysis, rather than using questionnaires, tests or software to mediate and process data (Merriam, 1998). I accepted the position of there not being an objective reality beyond the experiences and explanations of my participants, and strove only to render their own different versions of events through me as interpreter (Bartlett et al.2001). Rather than ignoring my own views and experience and trying to deal with them objectively, I concur with Levy (2003) and the suggestion that interpretivist researchers should not suspend their own subjectivity, but should consciously incorporate it into the research to contribute towards the development of new understandings. This sentiment is echoed by Charmaz (2000) with her contention that constructivist grounded theorists should offer full transparency in terms of previous work or experience and its potential for influence, within the research process. From this I took to mean my own view and experiences of landbased education and of HE in FE, and the sensitising concepts that have resulted from this experience. Rather than 'bracketing them off,' and "holding in abeyance presuppositions surrounding a specific phenomenon" (Gearing, 2004, p.1433), as an interpretivist researcher I used this to serve as initial exploratory avenues to explore.

6.2.7 Personal philosophical position statement

Darlaston-Jones (2007) argues that ascertaining and understanding the relationship between personal views regarding reality (ontology), and the meanings assigned to knowledge and how it is produced (epistemology) is central when justifying research design and methodological rationale. As part of this process, ontological, epistemological, axiological and rhetorical positions were identified and acknowledged. I discussed this in chapter three (section 3.3) when describing my

philosophical epiphany. Therefore, it is sufficient only to restate these positions, namely that I assumed a relativist ontological position, a constructivist epistemology, a value-laden axiology and rhetorical assumption based upon an informal, personally voiced writing style.

6.2.8 Reflexivity and maintaining a reflexive stance

My position regarding reflexivity centered around notions of knowledge construction and the importance of having an awareness of how researcher position (Aléx and Hammarström, 2008) is inextricably tied up with knowledge creation. I subscribed to the interpretive paradigm and its associated view of knowledge construction being social and cultural in nature. I contend that by engaging in a constant self-critique of questioning and challenging, but crucially, *accepting* the interplay between my background and experiences, and their potential to influence and impact upon the ways in which my research was approached and actioned (Creswell, 2013), I remained in step with Charmaz (2014). Charmaz asserts that a CGT study "*depends* on the researcher's view; it does not and cannot stand outside of it" (p.239). Therefore, what reflexivity does is to take account of the researcher's views and values and their role in determining research outputs, in a critical and transparent way. Further, Charmaz (1990) suggests that whilst the researcher's view cannot be disregarded, reflexivity is essential to ensure that original data grounded in the study always gains priority over any assumptions, preconceptions or previous experiences of the researcher.

6.2.9 Dilemma of familiarity and insiderism

When thinking about my own reflexivity, I considered how my experience of landbased/ HE in FE might be potentially problematic or advantageous. I began by considering my familiarity with the milieu (Mannay, 2010) as affording me 'insider' status. Hellawell (2006) maintains there are "varying shades of 'insiderism' and

‘outsiderism’” (p.489), and that being an insider does not necessarily mean working within the organisation being researched. Having knowledge and experience of the setting or sector, as opposed to being a total stranger to it, can be said to give some level of ‘insiderism’ to the researcher. I looked to Hockey (1993) and the argument that researching a familiar setting can be helpful with regard to diminishing the effects of culture shock, enhancing communication and rapport and harnessing knowledge of that world to increase the likelihood of participants opening up and revealing more intimate details because of my perceived ability to be empathetic. Whilst I took note of these ideas and considered them positively, I was concerned about issues of power asymmetries (Aléx and Hammarström, 2008) and the potential concerns when engaging closely with a small site and a small number of relatively inexperienced teacher participants. I wondered about my ‘status’ relative to the participants, and if it could undermine my attempts to co-construct knowledge in the spirit of CGT. Being more senior (and older), more experienced, working in a university and engaging in doctoral studies; might these influence the ways in which participants interacted with me? Similarly, if I were to establish good relations with the participants, how might I avoid the potential danger of “restricted vision” and “overrapport”? (Hong and Duff, 2002, p.194), or avoid betraying confidences? Indeed, Greene (2014) describes the process of reflexively determining and sustaining “social and emotional distance” as being “no easy task” (p.9). In order to ensure that I did not over-step important reflexive boundaries, I undertook a range of reflexive strategies throughout the research process to keep reflexivity at the forefront of my mind.

6.2.10 Strategies for maintaining reflexivity

When determining how to actually develop and maintain a reflexive stance, I sought guidance and confirmation from a number of sources. Following extensive reading and critical appraisal of a number of scholars, I looked to Hall and Callery (2001) and

their assertion that engaging one's personal theoretical sensitivity is associated with a GT study, and "emphasizes the reflexive use of self in the processes of developing research questions and doing analysis" (p.263). In seeking to develop a reflexive position, I also followed Breuer and Roth (2003) and their advice not only to observe participants, but also myself, throughout the entire research design, data collection and interpretive analysis period. I used a number of devices to assist me in maintaining personal reflexivity, and in creating an audit trail of my reflexive thinking. Primarily, this included keeping a research journal (Shepherd, 2006) (Appendix 5). From the reflexive position of a constructivist grounded theorist, I also used the constant comparative method and memo writing (Ramalho et al., 2015), more of which will be discussed in sub-section 6.7.1.

I used my research journal to reflect upon on different aspects of conducting the research. On a practical level I used it to record each time I visited Shireland College. A new, dated entry was made as soon after visiting as possible. I recorded ideas about what I had seen, heard and thought (Nadin and Cassell, 2006). I used it to frame my thoughts, emotions and anxieties about being a novice researcher and expressing self doubt about my endeavours, as well as reflecting upon how my day had been when out in the field, particularly if it had included an interview or observation. The journal also acted as a chronological record of events (ibid.). In keeping with a CGT approach, my early analytic thoughts and interpretations were captured as memos, and were written separately from my research journal (Appendix 6). In accordance with guidance from Charmaz (2006), I composed memos to fine tune further data collection and to give analytic meaning.

Having articulated my personal philosophical position and my approach to maintaining reflexivity, the following section describes key issues pertaining to research design.

6.3 Research design

In terms of CGT and PT, rationales for adopting them have previously been articulated (Chapters 4 and 5). Therefore I contend it is necessary only to remind of my argument that CGT and PT were best placed to answer my research question, and that both were considered and embedded into this methodological approach, with particular attention being paid to language, action, practice and meaning during the data collection phase. Further, the data was collected and analysed simultaneously in accordance with GT protocols as described in section 6.7.

6.3.1 Confirming constructivist grounded theory

Within this research design I used a CGT approach based upon the tenets as described by Charmaz, 2008a, p.155):

1. Minimising preconceived ideas about the research problem and data
2. Using simultaneous data collection and analysis to inform each other
3. Remaining open to varied explanations and/or understandings of the data, and
4. Focusing data analysis to construct middle – range theories.

In keeping with my own interpretivist position and in consideration of Schatzki's site and of Kemmis and Grootenboer's practice architectures, GT is based upon the premise of developing conceptual foundations and 'theory' from empirical data that is grounded within a particular research site. In contrast to positivist hypothetico-deductive approaches to theory generation, GT is based upon induction, rather than deduction and aims largely to create substantive theory, i.e. theory that relates to particular empirical instances (Bryman, 2015), rather than theory which is more formal and with more generalisability beyond a specific time and place. However, significantly for CGT, this 'theory' is not theory in a positivist sense, i.e. to test, verify and predict. Rather, it is more about abstract understanding and linking abstract

concepts, not variables, to give understanding (Charmaz, 2014) within contextual boundaries.

6.3.2 A modified version of CGT and issues regarding saturation

Here I remind that I used a modified approach, rather than adhering rigidly to the guidelines proffered by Charmaz (2006). Indeed, CGT emphasises “flexible guidelines, not methodological rules, recipes and requirements” (Charmaz, 2006, p.11). When presenting a research design Morrow (2005) argues that it is vital that any modifications or deviations away from published principles are articulated and defended. As described in Chapter 5 (section 5.6), I used a modified version of CGT whereby further theoretical sampling was achieved not with new/different participants, but on an intra-participant basis. This was a result of there only being a finite number of eligible participants with whom to interact. However, I acknowledge that a modified approach raises potential issues with regard to saturation.

Saturation is one of the tenets of GT and is reached when no new insights are revealed, even with the addition of new data (Cohen et al., 2011). Given the constraints placed upon a PhD study – time, funding, access to participants etc. – achieving saturation is not always possible. Indeed, Strauss and Corbin (1998) acknowledged that researchers sometime have “no choice and must settle for a theoretical scheme that is less developed than desired" (p.292). A study by Mason (2010) regarding doctoral students confirmed Strauss and Corbin’s stance by commenting that PhD students “do not have the luxury of continuing the sort of open-ended research that saturation requires” (p.5). With a fixed number of eligible participants, I was able only to use theoretical sampling within this group. However, I contend that careful and rigorous sampling and analysis enabled the achievement of “theoretical sufficiency” (Dey, 1999, p.25), to create an “analytic story” (Nelson, 2015, p.23), which resonated meaningfully with those within a site of study.

6.3.3 Using a single case within the research design

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) suggest case studies preserve the naturally occurring 'noise' of real life, asserting how "teachers always work with 'noise'… case studies are fertile grounds for conceptual and theoretical development" (p.3). In concert with my acceptance of Schatzki's notion of the site, I contend that adopting a single case was justified. By definition, the site is unique and reflects local practice and practices, context-specific language and socially constructed meaning, as well as powers of determination. For me to uncover and understand practice and meaning making at Shireland, I argue this could only logically be achieved by exploring this specific site, and this site alone. Whilst a larger sample of similarly constituted colleges could have been used, this would only have provided the potential for broad generalisations to be made. Further, I approached the idea of the case in terms of it being something that would provide deep insight into a specific place, rather than seeing the case as being a study to represent the world (Shen, 2009). I also considered a case study to be relevant given its suitability for answering exploratory *how* and *why* questions (Easton, 2010). The definition and purpose of a case study that most resonated with me was that provided by Stake (1995). Stake classifies case studies as being intrinsic, instrumental or collective. An intrinsic case is one which is deemed as being worthy of exploration by virtue of it having facets of specific interest, or by virue of its sheer ordinariness. In contrast, an instrumental case examines a situation in order that some aspect of theorising can take place, or by virtue of the case being a problem requiring some form of remedy. Finally, a collective case study is one where multiple cases are explored in order to understand a wider phenomenal context. Given my aspiration to construct theoretical understandings of HE in FE teacher pedagogic practice enactment, I adopted Stake's notion of an instrumental case, whereby advancement and enhancement of understanding is sought through a "study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (p.xi).

To achieve this I considered Stake's (2008) definition of a case as a "specific, unique, bounded system" (pp.444-445). I followed the advice of Adelman et al. (1983), with their view that the best way to identify boundaries was to use "common sense obviousness, e.g. an individual teacher, a single school, or perhaps an innovatory programme" (p.3). From this I considered the case to be bounded by the limits of Shireland College, and specifically, the HE in FE teacher participants working as part of the HE animal/equine/veterinary nursing teaching teams. Upon deciding to adopt a single, instrumental case study I then followed the advice of Yin (2003) to examine a comprehensive range of evidence including "documents, artifacts, interview, and observations" (p.8). Yin's guidance echoed that of Charmaz (2014) who suggested how using documents and archive materials could strengthen a CGT with a small number of interviews.

6.3.4 Criticism of case study within a research design

Inevitably any methodological approach will have its detractors and critics. The predominant concerns of case studies appear to be related to lack of generalisability and the danger of researcher bias. Nisbet and Watt (1984) state that case study research is "not easily open to cross-checking; hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective … is prone to problems of observer bias" (p.79). In response to this, I looked to Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001) and their contention that whilst generalisability might not be achievable, a single case offers possibilities for transferability to similar sites. The extents to which research findings can conceivably 'ring true' undoubtedly afford potentiality for wider application beyond the research site. Thus, I contend that using a single case was far from being methodologically flawed. Rather, I argue that a single case, when coupled with rigorous reflexivity was a logical and justifiable research design position to take when studying the uniqueness of a site.

6.4 Establishing an ethical position

Having established the research design, an outline of the research participants and how I gained access to Shireland College is presented. As part of this, I include the role of ethics within this doctoral study. Following Morrow (2005), this section begins with an overview of accessing the site, and a portrait of the research participants and important defining features. To preface this, I wish to be clear with regard to ethical considerations. Throughout the methodology design, data collection and analysis phases, the BERA Ethical Guidelines (2011) were consulted and adhered to in order to ensure an ethical framework in which to conduct the research. Prior to having my research proposal approved I was required to complete the *University of Bedfordshire Research Ethics Scrutiny Document* (Appendix 7).

6.4.1 Gaining access to Shireland College

Having gained permission from the University of Bedfordshire to undertake research, I sought to secure a site at which data could be gathered. Aside from the prerequisite of the research site having both FE and HE landbased provision, pragmatism and location were also factors of consideration in the process of securing a research site.

There are few LBCs in the UK. Having identified a limited number of potential sites, I had to consider choices regarding location, feasibility and personal relationships. Given a methodology where extended and repeated fieldwork was anticipated, the site needed to be within a reasonable commuting distance. I discounted colleges where I was, or had been a lecturer or external examiner/adviser on the grounds of there being a potential conflict of interest.

A shortlist of potential colleges was drawn up and an introductory letter and overview of the study was sent to the Principal to invite their participation (Appendices 8 and 9). I considered Wanat (2008) and her assertion that gaining and negotiating access to a site relies upon building positive relationships with people of influence. As such,

gatekeepers are vital to enabling research to proceed. Having intimate knowledge of the landbased sector and the ways in which LBCs tend to work, I believed the Principal was the only way in which to gain access. I considered the Principal as being an initial, high-level gatekeeper and communicated with them first as means of establishing contact.

After sending the research invitation to ten potential colleges, I had three declines, two potential collaborators and no response from the others. Of the two who expressed interest, I was asked to contact named gatekeepers, both of which were middle managers. These then became my official gatekeepers and were followed up with a visit to their colleges. At each college I assessed their location, the number of teachers they had, and had detailed discussions with the gatekeeper about the level of access I was seeking. Following my visits, both agreed to participate. However, before I could make a decision as to which site to accept, one of the gatekeepers subsequently contacted me to withdraw, citing concerns of the burden my fieldwork might have upon the teachers. This left Shireland College as my research site by default. As it happened, this was my first choice site given its location, and its greater enthusiasm for wishing to participate. As part of the negotiations for access, I was required by Shireland College to gain a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check in order that I could enter and work unsupervised at the site.

6.4.2 Participant briefing and gaining consent

Having secured access and DBS clearance, I informally met potential participants without the gatekeeper being present. This was significant, as it enabled me opportunities to talk and to begin to gain their trust. I followed the advice of Morrow (2005) who argued that it was only possible to understand and interpret the constructions of the participants if some rapport has been developed, and some idea of their context and institutional culture had been gained. I took the opportunity to

share my own landbased background as a way of illustrating my understanding, experience and empathy.

As part of following BERA guidance, potential participants were briefed about the aims of the study prior to any data being collected. This briefing was informed by Kaiser (2009) who suggested discussing issues of “beneficence (researchers must not harm their study participants) and confidentiality” (p.4). As part of this, participants were given an information document outling the study and an informed consent form (Appendices 10 and 11). Part of this information drew attention to data management and storage. Again, I looked to BERA (2011) and offered assurances to participants that all data would be kept securely, and that our conversations etc. would remain confidential. If I were to discuss them (with my PhD supervisors), I would not use their real name. This led me to adopting pseudonyms to preserve their identities. One of the dilemmas for me was how I might best give voice to my participants without inadvertently revealing their identities. Given that the research took place at only one small site and that all participants were aware of the participation of their immediate colleagues, deductive disclosure, i.e. where the traits of the individuals and/or organisation would make them/it easily identifiable (Kaiser, 2009) was considered to be a valid concern. Therefore, I took the decision to keep the level of detail about the college and participants deliberately opaque in order to counter this ethical apprehension. Only after being part of the briefing and reading the participant information, were potential participants asked to sign the informed consent form.

For classes where I undertook observations, every student (FE and HE) was provided with a student participant information document and an informed consent form to sign (Appendices 12, 13 and 14). They outlined research aims, why they were invited to participate, possible benefits were of being involved and the outcome

of research generated by the study. I reinforced the voluntary nature of their potential participation, and the prerogative of them to be able to withdraw from the study at any time. Throughout the data collection period no participants declined to give consent, nor did any withdraw from the study.

6.5 Sampling

Given the research aims, I sought to use a sampling process whereby the participants would be specifically associated with being able to answer my research question (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). I used purposive sampling where ‘‘particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices’’ (Maxwell, 1997, p.87). Given the aim to explore specific practices in a specific site, this appeared to be the most appropriate sampling technique to adopt.

6.5.1 Primary research participants – HE in FE teachers

Having decided upon a sampling strategy, criteria were used as a means of selecting appropriate participants:

- Participants taught either Equine, Animal or Veterinary Nursing subjects
- Participants taught FE and HE students.

Equine, Animal or Veterinary Nursing was selected as this complemented my own sphere of experience and knowledge. This sensitivity afforded me ‘points of departure’ for potential avenues to explore during the initial data collection phase. Given the dominance of FE within Shireland College, I wanted to observe and talk to participants about their pedagogic practices in its widest sense, as a means of unearthing pedagogic practices, and any potential enabling and constraining factors within the site.

Six female teachers (25–45 age range) met the criteria and agreed to participate. There were no other teachers within the college that fitted the specific characteristics required. Given the concern about deductive disclosure, it is not ethical to provide specific details regarding age, academic qualifications, subjects taught etc. Therefore, only a very broad and general description is offered. Each was assigned a pseudonym; Jane, Hermione, Sally, Caroline, Pat and Alison.

- Excluding one, all participants had less than five years of post-compulsory education teaching experience.
- Excluding two, all participants had less than two years of post-compulsory education teaching experience.
- Excluding one, none of the participants had taught in the university sector.*
- Excluding one, none of the participants had a Masters/PG/Doctoral qualification.
- Excluding one, all participants had, or were working towards an FE PGCE qualification.
- Excluding one, none of the participants had heard of, or had HEA recognition.
- All participants taught (HE and FE) 18–25 hours per week.
- Participants typical teaching load comprised of between 40–70 per cent HE.
- All taught classroom based theory sessions and practical classes in equestrian centre/animal unit/laboratory.
- All taught Levels 4 and 5 (FdSc/BSc) (no final year/Level 6 of the BSc was running during the time of data collection).

* at a specialist HEI, not a mainstream university

6.5.2 Additional research participants

In addition to the six teachers the study included informal conversations with a number of students and other staff. All conversations were informal and unplanned.

Additional staff members who participated in informal conversations included supervisory and managerial staff, staff with a remit for HE co-ordination and strategy, library staff, catering and estate staff. These conversations were often spontaneous and ad hoc in nature. They were never subject to recording via a Dictaphone. Any reflections or comments were reported in my research journal.

6.6 Data collection

Initial contact was made with the gatekeeper in October 2013, followed by an informal briefing and discussion with potential participants in December 2013. I visited the site again in January 2014 for further informal discussions and rapport building with the participants. Data collection commenced in March 2014. During a three-week period, data collection took place every day. Further ad hoc visits were made in March and April 2014 and additional data gathered. The rationale for an extended engagement was inspired by Spindler and Spindler (1992) and their assertion that both researchers and the research gain credibility by being in situ long enough to be able to observe and see things repeatedly, rather than on a one off basis.

6.6.1 Methods employed to collect data in the field

In devising a methodology to complement both my sensitivity to practice and CGT, I looked to Schatzki (2003) to help inform my design. He is unequivocal in his view that for a study of practice, “social phenomena can only be analysed by examining the sites where human coexistence transpires” (p.176). In later publications he contends how “the investigator has no choice but to do ethnography, that is, to practice interaction-observation” (Schatzki, 2012, p.24). Indeed, the centrality of ethnographic observation was reinforced by Corradi et al. (2008) with their view that it is “the key methodology with which to observe social and situated practices” (p.23).

As a result, this design used ethnographically inspired interviews and observations both of which I contend are justified in the light of relevant literature.

Following Spradley (1979), the interviews had an “explicit purpose” (p.59) to elicit understandings of the cultural dimensions particular to their context, i.e. Shireland College, in order to understand meaning regarding teachers’ practices. To facilitate this, intreviews (and indeed all verbal interactions) included encouraging participants to use their “native language” (ibid.), i.e. vocabularly and expressions specifically associated with that typically used by themselves and others within the research site of Shireland College. With reference to observations of teaching (as well as informal observations of daily campus life), an ethnographic thread ran through them by virtue of observing not as a detached, objective observer for specific, preordained aspects, but as an observer of interactions between people and groups, social and cultural aspects and what was said and what was left unspoken (Spradley, 1980). Observations and interviews were also guided by CGT, in terms of considering language and open-ended questioning, and with regard to simultaneous data collection and analysis.

6.6.2 Informal methods to collect data in the field

In addition to formal methods employed, I also used a series of informal approaches to gather data. Given that practice is emergent and is based upon action, rules, understanding and material arrangements (Reich and Hager, 2014), I sought to include approaches which might offer opportunities for participants to be able to verbalise or illustrate the more hidden, tacit facets of practice. Reimers et al. (2013) argue that when engaging in their everyday practice, fluent practitioners do not mentally note their actions and potential consequences. Rather, they simply do it; they practice. As such, when it comes to unearthing factors, which can mediate their action and practice, practitioners can be ill-equipped to provide conceptual

explanations of their own world and their practices within it. By using prolonged engagement at the site, I was afforded sufficient time to begin to understand the culture and customs of Shireland College (Savin-Baden and Howell Major, 2013). I was able to informally absorb practice sayings, doings and relatings, and to 'hang out' with participants (Bernard, 1994). I considered this to be a vital aspect to enable me to develop trust and to establish rapport. Ryan and Dundon (2008) argue how

> the better the quality of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee, the richer the quality of the data elicited. This is because experience shows that when interviewees are comfortable and trusting, they relate richer stories and elaborated explanations. (pp.443–444)

I wanted to be able to make the most of my time at Shireland College by being able to gather as much rich and varied data as possible. Therefore, I was keen to remove any potential barriers between my participants and myself as quickly as possible.

When 'hanging out' and engaging in the daily life of the campus, I took opportunities to talk informally when a potentially useful situation or person presented itself, making sure that I recalled and wrote up my notes as quickly afterwards as I could (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Some of the informal talks involved a more lengthy interaction. Borrowing from a rural science GT study by Jerneck and Olsson (2013), prior to undertaking interviews I undertook 'narrative walks' with the participants. By informally 'chatting' whilst looking around the library or the equine rehabilitation yard, as opposed to sitting across a desk in a formal interview, they assumed the position of being the more experienced 'knower'. This was helpful in terms of giving them both a sense empowerment, and in equalizing any asymmetries that formal interviewing can create.

A further tactic employed to assist in gaining rapport and acceptance was based upon dress code advice from Bonner and Tolhurst (2002). They argued that field researchers should aim to wear clothes that would help them to blend in with the

particular research site. I considered this to be particularly important for me at Shireland College. Teachers in LBCs tend to wear clothing that allows them to take part in practical sessions. Wearing of scrubs, overalls or jodhpurs is typically the 'uniform' worn in these settings by staff and students. However, I noted from my initial meeting with the gatekeeper (a senior campus staff member), how they had a formal appearance akin to corporate business settings, as did all of the management staff I encountered. None of them adopted a dress code of overalls and wellington boots. As I sought to gain rapport and establish commonalities and empathy with my participants, I took the decision to model their dress code and to capitalize upon my inherent 'insiderism' (Hellawell, 2006). I felt that wearing my own working wardrobe might be seen as mirroring college managers, thereby creating a power imbalance between us. If my participants felt I was a total outsider and stranger to their world, I considered that subsequent interactions and perceptions could be treated with caution and less openness.

Away from formal data gathering I used my time at Shireland College to populate my research journal and sketch classrooms and buildings. In creating a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p.6) of the site I sought to do more than just record a superficial skim of physical appearances. Rather, I followed the guidance of Denzin (1989b) by going beyond surface information and appearances and focusing on "detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another" (p.83). As part of this, I took photographs of rooms, posters on walls, information and any other artefacts that I considered to be relevant or interesting. This was prompted by Scholar (2016) and her suggestion that institutional policy and culture can be made visible material via signage, documents and artefacts. To serve as examples, the following three photographs (Figures 4, 5 and 6) were taken when I was familiarising myself with the campus. Mindful of Schatzki (2002) and his contention that the "artifacts, organisms, and things" (p.101) had the potential to

"effect, alter…prefigure, and facilitate practices" (Schatzki, 2016, p.6), I considered their presence and the potential to mediate pedagogic practice in any way, so I kept a record of them. Photographs also helped to keep the site 'fresh' in my mind and served as useful stimuli to recall the college when I was not at the site.

Figure 4. "Well Done" reward board in the college canteen to showcase student achievement and to praise good behaviour and attitudes

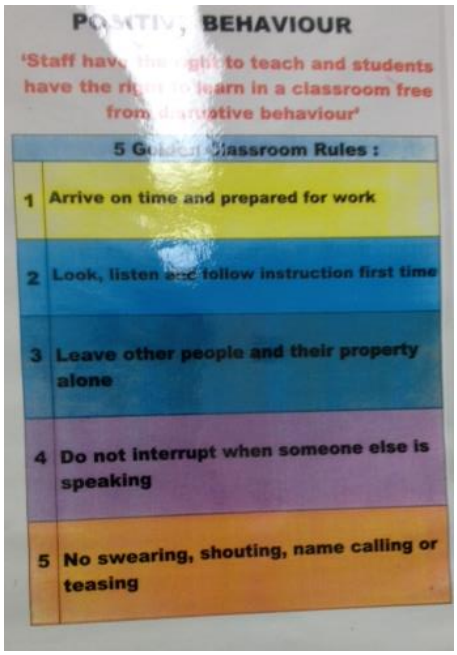

Figure 5. Shireland College student Policy on Behaviour. This was found in every classroom

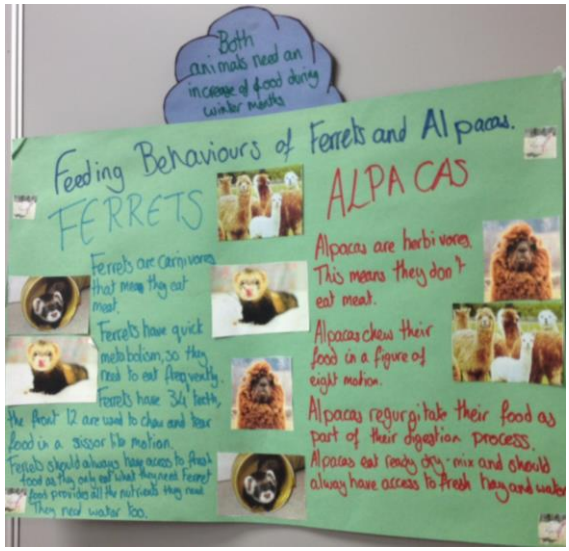

Figure 6. Example of an FE student poster within a classroom used for FE and HE teaching

Further secondary data included HE programme handbooks, the college prospectus, recent Ofsted reports and QAA IQER reports from the validating university (Appendices 15 and 16). Following advice from Riech and Hager (2014), I sought to mine these documents for any additional insight into current and historical practice.

6.6.3 Teaching observations

As discussed previously, ethnographic observations were considered as being a vital method when undertaking a study sensitive to practice. Having elected to include observations, I was faced with making decisions about who to observe, what to observe, how to record observations and, crucially, my role in the observation process. Given the study was focused on HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments, observing teachers teaching appeared to be logical. I wanted to observe participants teaching FE and HE sessions in order to get as broad a picture of their teaching practice as possible. An issue surrounding observation is that of the Hawthorne effect, i.e. that can people change their behaviour as a result of knowing that they are being observed (McCambridge et al. 2014). To mitigate against this I observed the same FE class and the same HE class for three weeks in succession. I

considered that this would enable students and teacher participants to become acclimatised to my presence. Further, it would give greater credibility to my study by enabling me to observe and see things repeatedly over time, as opposed to only on a 'one off' basis (Spindler and Spindler, 1992).

In terms of what to observe, I deliberately chose an open and loose framework. Whereas a tightly prescribed observation schedule is applicable where a hypothesis has already been decided upon, my observations were not concerned with hypothesis testing, hence adopting an approach where data was gathered for its illuminatory properties (Cohen et al. 2011). Given my sensitivity practice, I looked to Gheradi (2012) and her call to understand how practices are seen 'from inside' (p.2), and to analyse not only *how* a practice is enacted, but what sense it gives to the actors involved and the relations which become established as a result. I interpreted this as being to focus on actions as well as interactions between the teachers and their students. In recognition of Charmaz, I also paid attention to action and in vivo language, i.e. words and expressions actually uttered by the participants (some of which subsequently became "in vivo codes" (Strauss, 1987, p.3), e.g. "Busking it" (sub-section 6.7.8). As suggested by Angrosino (2007), "nothing conveys the sense of 'being there' more than the actual words of the participants" (p.41), therefore I paid special attention to language, lexicon and phraseology.

Other key areas for consideration included the setting and the students (gender, age, course of study etc.), resources and material aspects (I.T., animals, activities etc.), how the setting was configured, the session content, teacher delivery style, the level of student engagement, verbal and non-verbal communication and anything else that struck me as interesting or significant. As an observer I needed to be clear about how others viewed me within the session. As an interpretivist researcher I was clear that viewing the world as a detached, objective observer was not possible. As the

research instrument I was not neutral or value-free, thus I would always have some participation; the question was to what extent? I looked to Gold (1958) and his classification of research roles; the complete participant, the participant-as-observer, the observer-as-participant and the complete observer. I immediately rejected the complete observer as I considered being a detached outsider was a position more aligned to positivism. Further, it would preclude any co-construction between my participants and myself, a key tenet of CGT. Similarly, I rejected both the complete participant and the participant-as-observer because I was not a member of the group at Shireland College. By default, I assumed the role of observer-as-participant. This enabled me to be transparent about my not being a group member and my reasons for being there, but with the scope for peripheral interactions with those being observed. This opportunity to be discreet yet attentive when observing (Cohen et al., 2011), and to talk to participants gave me opportunities to ask questions, clarify and subtly probe.

During observations I used a field diary to record immediate notes about what went on, and my thoughts and reflections, as well as questions or themes to follow up later. For sessions within a classroom I was also able to record them using a Dictaphone. I was unable to do this for lessons in the riding arena or animal unit due to issues with acoustics and exterior weather conditions. For these observations I relied on simultaneous note taking in my field diary, followed by immediate rereading, consolidation and adding reflective comments (Aldous, 2012) to ensure I captured the essence of what went on.

6.6.4 Teacher participant interviews

Two interviews with each teacher participant were conducted; one prior to the observation period and one at the end. I used the initial interview to gain biographical information. By focusing on oral histories, practices can be uncovered. Importantly,

the nature of practice assumes both a history, and the scope for change. Therefore, using oral histories can be fruitful, particularly if the discussion includes previous practices in comparison to current and future ones (Reich and Hager, 2014). Allowing participants to talk about themselves early on in our relationship enabled us to “break the ice” (Minichiello et al. 2008, p.155) by creating an easy, non-threatening topic for discussion. It empowered them and helped diminish any issues about potential power imbalance between us. Another contribution towards increasing empowerment and reducing discrepancies of power involved the choice of location for the interviews to take place. Anxious to maintain privacy, but to conduct the interview in a comfortable, non-threatening place, I followed the advice of Parnis et al. (2005) by encouraging my participants to choose where they wanted to be interviewed.

In line with CGT, the initial interview enabled me to use my sensitivity and experience of LBCs and HE in FE as initial ‘points of departure’ for early questioning. I followed the guidance of Charmaz (2006) to use “a few broad and open-ended questions” (p.26) and to use her framework of intensive interviewing. Within this she urges researchers to consider participants as being experts and to allow them to “tell their stories” (p.27). Initial portraits of them and their practice were subsequently taken as focus points for me to keep in mind when undertaking the subsequent teaching observations and the final interview. As discussed, there were no further participants available for any theoretical sampling to take place following the initial interview. Therefore, these initial interviews provided theoretical sampling opportunities on an intra-sample basis. After undertaking the first few initial interviews they were reflected upon and memoed (sub-section 6.7.4) before being used to categorise and inform the subsequent interviews (Alemu et al., 2015). These preliminary interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes, were recorded using a Dictaphone and later transcribed (sub-section 6.6.5). The second interview lasted 90 to 120 minutes and was subject to the

same recording and analysis protocol. In concert with Charmaz (2006), I focused upon following up specific incidents from observations, and comments they had made during the earlier interview, informal conversations and teaching observations. This ensured the data remained grounded in the studied experience. To ensure comparability between participants, all broad themes identified from the first interviews and teaching observations were discussed with all of the participants, as well as discussing things specific to them as individuals.

Keen to explore practice and the meaning ascribed to it by the participants, I sought to ask questions to unlock and reveal the connections between practice doing and knowing (Reich and Hager, 2014). Similarly, semi-structured questions were focused on participants exploring the heritaged conditions (Lloyd et al., 2013) for HE at Shireland College and why or how they considered a particular practice had come into being. More broadly, questions about HE and being an HE teacher also featured, as well as lived experiences of being both an FE and HE teacher within a predominantly FE site, and how confident and competent they felt when teaching FE and HE.

6.6.5 Transcription approaches and member checking

Transcription followed each interview. Elliott (2005) asserts that the manner in which those in particular contexts articulate narratives necessitates the preserving of greater information. Thus, the umms, errs and pauses etc. were not removed, as I considered that pauses/time taken to respond to questions could prove to be useful when analysing the data during coding. In keeping with a socially constructed stance, I considered the interview transcripts as being a "co-authored conversation in context... that is open to multiple alternative readings" (Poland, 2002, p.635), rather than being an accurate record of fact whereby myself and the participant would have an exact shared social reality. In its traditional sense of verification, I did not consider

member checking to be appropriate per se. Like Charmaz (2014), I did not want to use member checking to confirm, i.e. verify or validate, the transcripts as being 'true' in a positivist sense. Rather, I used member checking to create "an occasion for extending and elaborating the researcher's analysis" (Bloor, 2001, p.393). I felt that co-creating renderings of the account between my participants and myself was not only ethical, but also in accord with CGT. I did offer all participants the opportunity to see transcripts after each interview, but none of them wanted to look at the transcripts; all citing time pressures and their trust in me that they would be a fair record. However, to maintain credibility in the study, I did still want to have some opportunity for them to be part of process. Therefore, during informal conversations I did talk to the participants about the interviews and gave a summary of the key areas we talked about. This enabled them to offer their views and to comment with regard to my recollection of the encounter was broadly in line with theirs or not. This was not to satisfy positivist notions of validity, rather it was to allow me to follow up areas of ambiguity or to seek clarification.

Having described the methods utilised to gather data, I continue by providing an overview of the steps I took to sort and analyse my data in accordance with a GT approach. I conclude the chapter by presenting the categories that were constructed following this process.

6.7 Sorting, categorising and analysing data

As part of being *within* the research process I was required to make a decision regarding whether to use software to assist me in the data sorting, categorising and analysis phases. Traditionally, researchers coded transcripts/documents manually by physically marking up and annotating paper copies of transcripts. Increasingly researchers use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to organise and code data. Whilst there are undoubtedly benefits in terms of time and

data management efficiencies, I took the decision not to use CAQDAS. Whilst many support its use, it has been criticised for its “code-and-retrieve logic” (Seale, 1999, p.103), with critics keen to remind that it is not a substitute for a researchers’ own interpretation and analysis. Personal choice and my own levels of digital literacy drove my decision. I considered that manually coding 12 interviews was feasible (Basit, 2003) and I was more comfortable with using pen and paper. I was concerned about the steep learning curve to learn to use software competently as cautioned by Walsh (2003). After reading about novice researchers suffering “usability frustration, even despair and hopelessness” when trying to learn CAQDAS (Lu and Shulman, 2008, p.108), my decision to take more time, but to remain in control of the process via manual coding, was confirmed.

Before coding, I familiarised myself with the transcripts via multiple readings as well as building in space to “check the transcripts back against the original audio recordings for accuracy” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.96). I paid attention not just to language but also to tone, inflection, pauses, hesitations and anything else that might indicate some hidden meaning. Having preserved the words of my participants intact, I felt reading them and hearing their voices helped to keep me close to them during the coding phase (Mills et al., 2006).

After initial familiarisation I followed Charmaz’s example (2014), and left a large margin on the page to enable me to construct in my codes. Adhering to guidance proffered by Taylor and Gibbs (2010), I initially ‘pawed’ the transcripts using coloured pens and highlighting any words or phrases which appeared to be significant or interesting (Appendix 17). After pawing I coded transcripts following guidance from Charmaz (2014) (Appendix 18), after which initially coded transcripts were cut up with same/similar blocks of text/codes being grouped together (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). These similarly constituted groups were mapped onto flip chart paper to

enable me to see what sort codes I had, and how these fitted into my emerging categories (Daly, 2007). Daly (ibid.) commented how “this is sometimes experienced as a valley of despair where there are too many codes, categories, and properties and not enough understanding of how it all fits together” (p.231). This certainly resonated with me, particularly at the start of the process. However, I did find that I became more adept as I gained confidence and experience.

6.7.1 Tenets of constructivist grounded theory coding

Data was gathered and analysed simultaneously in accordance with key CGT tenets. The process of gathering and analysing data comprised a number of stages. An important caveat to note is that whilst I have described them in a linear fashion, this is purely for ease of communication. It does not reflect the reality of the continual and iterative approaches taken when actually working with the data in a CGT. In accordance with Glaser and Strauss (1967), the data collection and analysis “blur and intertwine continually” (p.43), and I was consistently engaged in memoing, constant comparison and theoretical sampling, whereby data collected from interviews and observations was compared with previous data.

Charmaz (2014) suggests that there are eight key stages to go through when constructing a CGT (Figure 7):

- Theoretical sensitivity
- Coding (initial/open, focused and theoretical)
- Memoing
- Constant comparison
- Theoretical sampling
- Development of conceptual categories (theory building)
- Saturation
- Constructivist grounded theory.

I briefly characterise each in turn here, before discussing how I actually engaged with each stage in the process. My interpretative analysis will be discussed in the following chapter and the final substantive CGT will be presented in Chapter 8. Having previously attended to the topic of saturation (sub-section 6.3.2), it will not be repeated in the following section, aside from confirming that the final CGT (see Chapter 8) is an "analytic story" (Nelson, 2015, p.23), which has "theoretical sufficiency" (Dey, 1999, p.25), rather than theoretical saturation.

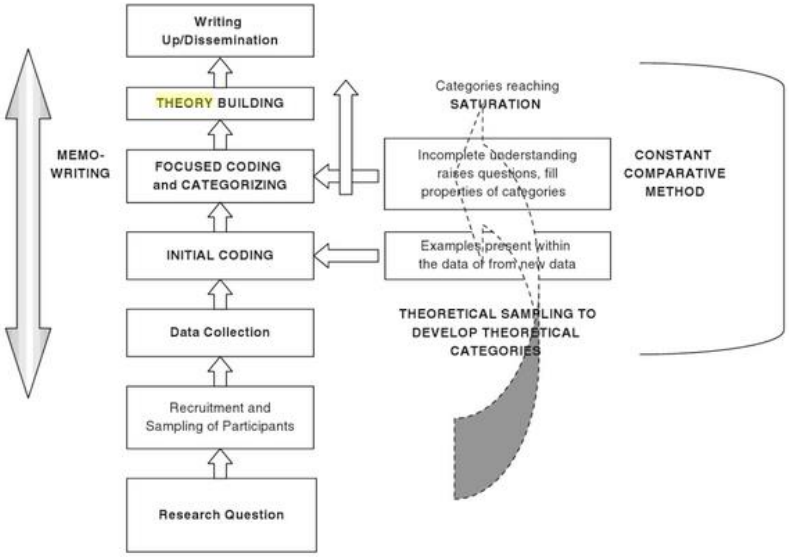

Figure 7. Steps and stages involved in developing a Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014, p.18)

6.7.2 Theoretical sensitivity

I used my experience of HE in FE to develop sensitivity and to indicate initial and subsequent avenues to explore, i.e. 'points of departure'. Theoretical sensitivity was also gained from undertaking the initial, sensitising HE in FE pedagogy literature review (Chapter 2), from sustained engagement in the research site and from familiarity with interview transcripts.

6.7.3 Coding (initial, focused and theoretical)

Codes are the building blocks of a GT. They form its foundations derived from empirical data, ultimately resulting in the 'generation' or construction of a substantive theory that explains what is going on in a given site, as embodied in the data. Together with memos (sub-section 6.7.4), codes are "essential for identifying concepts and categories as well as for developing theory subsequently" (Alemu et al., 2015).

Within CGT, three types of coding can be used – initial, focused, and theoretical (Evans, 2013). During initial coding CGT researchers are urged to stay close to the data and code quickly with an emphasis on being active, and on applying short and simple codes (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2014). Employing line-by-line coding, initial codes reveal emerging areas to pursue and to check in subsequent data gathering. In focused coding, researchers pursue and group together initial codes that are most significant or frequently occurring in order to determine the emerging core categories. Typically, at this stage some or many initial codes will be rejected or subsumed into other codes. Unlike in initial coding where codes are closely linked to the empirical data, the levels of abstraction increase during the focused coding phase (Flick, 2014). Finally, the few, core focused codes, which appear to provide "analytic momentum" (Charmaz, 2006, p.137) are elevated to become tentative categories.

Theoretical coding involves categorising data with the influence of theoretical knowledge already available within the literature (Kelle, 2007). Charmaz suggests using theoretical coding when constructing categories is ambiguous and "resounds of application, not emergence" (Charmaz, 2008a, p.161). Given the inherently emergent nature of CGT, I considered importing and applying existing theoretical concepts at the post-focused coding stage to be too early, therefore electing not to use theoretical coding. This is supported by Charmaz (2014) when she suggests that

whilst initial and focused coding always takes place, theoretical coding may not, because “initial and focused coding will suffice for many projects” (p.147). Charmaz (2014) remarks how grounded theorists tend to borrow theory from their own discipline, an approach she contends has the potential to “limit ways of seeing and perhaps force data into old boxes” (p.153). Given the under-researched nature of HE in FE pedagogic practice, I wanted to remain as open as possible to theoretical possibilities to foster “new ways of thinking rather than reproducing the old” (p.150). As such, I opted to integrate my categories not by applying existing theoretical codes, but by using my memos and my empirically derived data to ask theoretical questions of them (Charmaz, 2008a), thereby allowing me to put together an interpretive analytic rendering, which made sense to me (Mahdieh et al., 2012). As asserted by Thornberg and Charmaz (2014), whilst constructivist grounded theorists must ultimately explore all manner of existing theory to best explain their analytic interpretations, I agree that this should be left for researchers to work out for themselves, rather than being guided (possibly wrongly or without covering all theoretical possibilities) by a pre-existing theoretical coding frame. Thus, I followed the advice of Charmaz (2014) to use my theoretical sensitivity and memos as a means of demonstrating how my categories and concepts related. Charmaz (1996) suggests interrogating theory and pertinent literature to illustrate relationships between concepts and themes (Urquhart and Fernández, 2013) *after* constructing categories in order to explicitly weave relevant and resonant existing concepts into the GT narrative and resultant substantive theory. This is the stance I took throughout the analysis and interpretation phases. Chapter 7 presents my interpretive analysis *without* existing theory, whilst the Chapter 8 presents my discussion, which is fully integrated *with* reference to specific existing theory, and concludes with the presentation of the substantive CGT (comprised of both my own theorising and pertinent existing theory).

Returning to initial and focused coding, progressively moving through and within these coding phases enables raw data to be sorted, summarised and synthesised (Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2007) in order to ultimately develop conceptual categories, i.e. an overarching, hierarchical taxonomic group where codes cohere and cluster in accordance to their similarities and the patterns they create (Saldaña, 2013). Typically codes and coding illuminate important issues and concerns as relative to the participants being studied within a particular site. Further, codes tend to represent matters which "occur and reoccur" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, p.83), or are considered as being "recurring regularities" (Guba, 1978, p.53). Additionally, codes should describe meaning and actions (Alemu et al., 2015).

At its most rudimentary, much of the process of coding involves breaking up and naming segments of data. However, it is much more than this. According to Charmaz (2014), coding should be seen as being a heuristic device to help researchers to learn about the data, not simply a methodological procedure to apply. Charmaz (2014) claims coding is the "pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, you define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means" (p.113). In terms of what to code I followed Charmaz (2003) and her advice to ask myself:

- "What is going on?
- What are people doing?
- What is the person saying?
- What do the actions and statements take for granted?
- How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?" (pp.94–95).

These emphases regarding speech, context and action all agreed with the underlying precepts of practice theory (particularly Practice Architectures), as well as Schatzki's notion of the site.

Given how I used an abbreviated form of GT with only the original group of six teacher participants, I followed Willig (2013) and adopted line-by-line coding. She recommended this approach as a means of off-setting some of the lack of breadth that could potentially accompany a restricted data set. This approach is also endorsed by Charmaz (2014).

An additional defining element of the constructivist version of GT is the emphasis upon coding for gerunds – the verb form which acts as a noun, i.e. with an *ing* ending such as describing (verb) v description (noun) – to focus on action and process, rather than themes. Charmaz (2006) suggests gerunds possess "a strong sense of action and sequence whilst also helping to remain focused on participants' responses and contextual meanings" (p.49). Complementary to a sensitivity to practice, Charmaz (2008a) appeals to CGT researchers to focus upon gerunds in order to reveal "implicit processes, to make connections between codes, and to keep their analyses active and emergent" (p.164).

6.7.4 Memoing

Glaser (1978) states "memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding" (p.83). When considering GT, Lempert (2007) declared memo writing as being "essential to grounded theory methodological practices and principles" (p.245). The process of memoing does not occur in isolation. It takes place concurrently with data sampling, analysis and collection and can signpost where to go in subsequent data collection rounds (Holton, 2008). When writing memos researchers are reminded that they are not bald descriptions, rather they help to "conceptualize the data in narrative form" (Lempert,

2007, p.245), and indicate how connections between categories have emerged (Holton, 2008). Hesse-Biber (2013) considers memoing in terms of not only writing about data, but in terms of reflexivity and asking questions about 'what is going on' Charmaz (2014) amplifies this idea by reminding to also consider process and action, and to write about why codes and categories have been constructed in a particular way.

Memoing is also a vital element to ensuring trustworthiness, because it not only tracks analytic decisions made by the researcher (Elliott and Lazenbatt, 2005), but keeps the analysis 'grounded' within the data by making constant comparisons and by including participant quotes (Hesse-Biber, 2013) in order to preserve their voice and their meanings (Appendix 6).

6.7.5 Constant comparison

Constant comparison is a vital and on-going endeavour whereby emergent theory (in codes and tentative categories) is constantly compared with new data to ascertain if themes are in concert with earlier findings, or if the data are telling a different story. As well as comparison, the process attends to continually questioning the developing categories and their meaning (Gasson, 2004), as well as providing analytic direction for collection of additional data (Spiggle, 1994). This iterative approach lends itself as a reflexive device, whereby the continual turning and returning to data enables progressive refinement of understanding about the data and its story (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009).

Charmaz (2003, p.259) explains the process thus:

> Generating codes facilitates making comparisons, a major technique in GT. The constant comparative method of GT means (a) comparing different people (such as their views, situations, actions, accounts, and experiences), (b) comparing data from the same individuals with themselves at different

points in time, (c) comparing incident with incident, (d) comparing data with category, and comparing a category with other categories.

6.7.6 Theoretical sampling

As an integral part of a triad composed of constant comparison and of memo writing, theoretical sampling entails the collection of data “from people, places, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts” (Strauss and Corbin, 2008, p.143). As described by Charmaz (2006), “initial sampling in grounded theory is where you start, whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go” (p.100). Following early, initial coding and memoing, analytic possibilities and ideas will come to the fore. It is at this juncture that theoretical sampling is used as means of enabling greater depth of focus. It is a very deliberate and non-random approach whereby people (or sites) are selected by virtue of their relevance or relationship with emerging ideas and categories (Denscombe, 2014). When identified, new questions and/or new people (or sites) can be probed and investigated in more depth to ascertain if early conceptual ideas hold analytic weight.

6.7.7 Development of conceptual categories (theory building)

Following focused (and theoretical coding if used) and memoing, the journey from description to analytical conceptualisation results in the emergence of conceptual categories (Bendassolli, 2013). Whilst classic GT asserted that only one core category was possible, Charmaz (2014) claims more than one is acceptable. At this stage the tentative categories from focused coding are compared, linked and integrated to form core categories (Alemu et al., 2015). Finally, saturation or theoretical sufficiency of the core categories is deemed to have been achieved by virtue of there being sufficient relevant and rigorous data to support the category and its inherent properties. It is at this stage that categories are usually integrated with

existing literature to construct a substantive CGT that theoretically accounts for a particular area of study.

6.7.8 From coding to categorising

Having labelled all of the initial interview transcripts with initial codes, I took codes that appeared to be either the most significant, or those that appeared frequently (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2012) to use as focused codes, i.e. more abstract and higher-order codes. At this point I had established a theoretical direction in which to travel in subsequent interviews, de-briefs and ad hoc encounters with participants and others at Shireland College. During this process I took initial codes and subsumed relevant ones into fewer, more related focused codes. Guidance from Charmaz (2006) advocated dropping codes that did not strongly align with either the theoretical direction of the research and/or the central research question. Padgett (2008) supported this view by suggesting codes with "too few excerpts (or their content is thin)" (p.153) should be dropped or subsumed by another code. These fewer, more conceptually rich focused codes formed the conceptual themes by which I was able to begin preliminary category clusters, with each focused code representing a property or characteristic of a fledgling category (Liebenberg et al.,, 2012; Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012).

For example, from the initial interviews I generated a number of initial in vivo codes. I used in vivo codes as these resonated powerfully with my teacher participants' voices representing "symbolic markers" (Charmaz, 2014, p.134) of them and their worlds. After memoing, I considered that there was sufficient commonality and "theoretical reach" (Charmaz, 2014, p.141) for one initial code – "Us and them" – to be raised up to a focused code; "Feeling insecure". With this and all newly constructed focused code(s) I was able to apply them to subsequently gathered data to see how they accounted for further data (Charmaz, 2012). By applying focused

codes I was testing out nascent categories to see if new data in any way expanded or contradicted emerging ideas from initial coding. Ultimately, after multiple cycles of constant comparison, abstraction and memoing, this focused code – “Feeling insecure” – was categorised within the Teacher Identity and Agency sub-category in the “Busking it” main category (Chapter 7, section 7.4) (Appendix 19).

Often constructed after subsuming a number of similar initial codes (Dourdouma and Mörtl, 2012), the process of reducing the number of initial codes was not purely for ease of data management. Rather, by engaging with the initial codes and scrutinizing them, I took my thinking from a descriptive to a more analytic plane (Charmaz, 2008c). Using new data from subsequent observations, de-briefs and interviews, I took focused codes to code larger data sections to help me to begin to make sense of it. By constructing focused codes, it meant subsequent data collection would be aligned to following emergent leads to facilitate further understanding of the nascent categories. I also went back to my initial interviews to recode them using the focused codes, as a means of appraising if any previously unseen information surfaced. I constantly compared my codes and data with each other, moving across and between them to make comparisons between my participants, and looking for similarities and differences whilst making analytical distinctions and connections. Via this on-going constant comparative analysis of data (in and across interviews, observations and incidents) (Charmaz, 1996), I started to gather, or cluster focused codes into fledgling categories, i.e. groups with shared/similar concepts and patterns in accordance with their properties, e.g. “the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.117). As I constructed categories and their conceptual definitions, I wrote memos to articulate the connections to initial codes and other categories (Thornberg and Charmaz, 2012). Defining the characteristics and properties of categories provided each of them with a multi-faceted form and identity.

6.7.9 Theoretical sampling to focus data collection direction

During the initial interviews I followed emergent leads generated by the first two participants with the remaining four participants. After the completion of all of the initial interviews and comparing them, I had tentative conceptual categories deriving from all of the participants' initial interviews. I then undertook theoretical sampling to begin to elicit further data to both explore and to fill out the properties of my categories, by following up on the concepts that were surfaced by my participants (Tweed and Charmaz, 2012). This was carried out during the post-teaching observation de-brief meetings, as well as informally through ad hoc conversations. This process also involved pursuing gaps and specifically sampling and asking questions to try and fill holes in the data, with the goal of the categories attaining theoretical sufficiency.

6.7.10 Constructing categories

The process of constructing and finally settling upon categories was not straightforward and required a shift in my thinking to an increasingly abstract approach. Considered the "theoretical bones of the analysis" (Dey, 2007, p.168), Watling and Lingard's (2012) statement: "Just how categories become concepts and description becomes understanding can seem mysterious and difficult to grasp" (p.855), absolutely summed up my situation during that period of time in the thesis write up.

In spite of the detailed GT coding and memoing stages described previously, the actualities of following the stages was far from easy. Having amassed a wealth of empirical data and a reflexive position from which to interpret it, the actualities of making sense of the data was enormously challenging. Thorne (2000) remarks that qualitative analysis is "complex and mysterious" (p.69), and as a neophyte grounded theorist I found grappling with analysis terminology confusing and contradictory. With

hours of interviews, note books full of field and teaching session observation notes, plus college and partner university materials, I was “drowning in data” (Silverman and Marvasti, 2008, p.192) as I was left to consider how I might best make sense of all of my raw documents (Piantanida et al., 2004).

As a GT novice, I found wrestling with analysis terminology particularly confounding and ambiguous, with many different sources and writers talking about codes, concepts and categories as being one and the same thing, or as being totally different from each other. Given the inductive nature of GT, I did become distracted and had to keep reminding myself of my research question and the rationale for the study (Birks and Mills, 2015). The process involved multiple attempts to ‘get it right’, whereby I gathered focused codes into clusters that had similar and interrelated concepts (Gaffney et al., 2012), i.e. those relating to teachers and their identity, those relating to the nature and perceived abilities of HE students at Shireland College etc. As part of this process I repeatedly compared codes with each other, taking a number of focused codes and elevating them to become provisional categories in order to find the best way of accounting for the data and their theoretical properties (Gunnmo et al.,2011). Overlapping issues meant there were some codes that could have been categorised in more than one way (Whiteside et al., 2014). I approached this categorisation by going back to my memos to re-visit my thinking regarding my codes and my conceptualising of them, as well as looking again at transcripts and re-living the interviews via audio recordings. I also talked about my categories and how best to present them with my supervisors. This iterative re-examination of data and of memos helped me to gain new and more refined insights and meaning (Srivastava and Hopwood, 2009).

When I was satisfied that a draft organisation and arrangement of categories did account for the data, I then made use of integrative diagramming (Charmaz, 2014) to

aid the process of visualising my categories and sub-categories. This was a slow, iterative process, which involved some experimentation with the categories and sub-categories as I tried to ascertain the best arrangement to represent and explain the data. Diagramming is advocated by Charmaz (2014) through her assertion that it, “sharpens the relationships among your theoretical categories” (p.224). Similarly, Whiteside et al. (2014) suggest how visual models can assist CGT researchers in developing theory.

By using a large whiteboard and coloured pens, I was able to write up my categories, their sub-categories and key characteristics to present them as a visual map (Lauckner et al., 2012) (Figure 8). Often messy, scribbly and frequently rubbed out and tweaked, the diagrams were really useful for me to ‘see’ what I was dealing with. Using arrows and dotted lines to connect or relate each of the categories in some way, I worked through a series of iterations to identify how factors such as the college site, or teacher experience or the college management, could all be connected, and how they influenced the process of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College. When I was satisfied with a version I would photograph it, date it, print it and pin it up on the wall. I repeated this a number of times and was able to then see all of the photographs alongside each other to visually compare them.

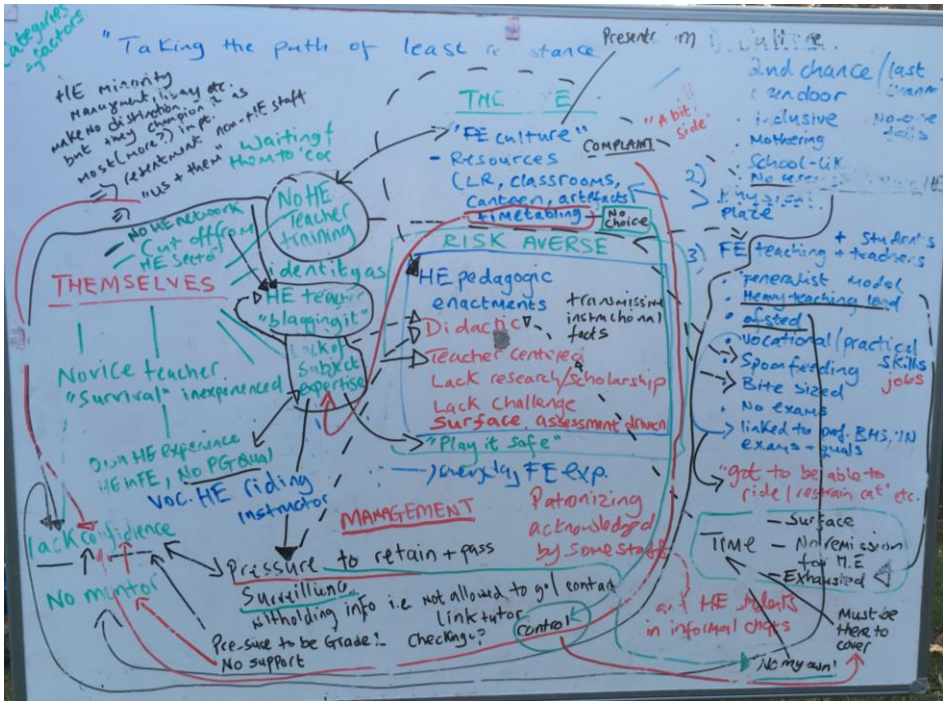

Figure 8. Example of an early diagram to identify conceptual links between provisional categories

During the diagramming process I repeatedly returned to my memos in order to confirm the relationship between what I written and what I drawn. Doing this enabled me to think theoretically about the categories and to see if there was anything else that I might have missed. Having the categories as a visual diagram was helpful in seeing new relationships between the categories, prompting me to re-visit some interview data and to rethink and redefine some of the categories as a result.

Returning to my memos throughout the process facilitated me in moving to a more theoretical plane, with what the categories actually meant in terms of a substantive theory. I had identified a number of categories, but what was the connection between them all? How would this become theory? Having constructed my categories, I used careful interpretation and memoing (sorting and integrating the ones I had, and writing new ones) to identify links and relationships within and between my categories (Gaffney et al., 2012). I pushed myself hard to raise the abstraction levels

of my interpretive thinking in order to formulate some hypotheses that could plausibly explain and account for the connections and patterns I had constructed. This required substantial and sustained data immersion, with a seemingly endless cycle of reading, re-reading, coding of earlier transcripts and synthesising of my findings from all data sources.

The final categories account for the entire body of data (Charmaz, 2006), thereby representing a synthesis of the findings from all of the data different sources used. Charmaz (2006) asserts “the sound of a human voice makes for compelling reading” (p.176). With this in mind, and not wishing my analytic interpretations to be little more than “voiceless, objectified recordings” (ibid., p.174), I have written my interpretative analysis chapter in order to ensure the voices and experiences of the participants foreground my rendering and feature strongly throughout. Using selected interview extracts, I have tried to adhere to Charmaz (2014) and her advice to present a “balance of analytic statements anchored in concrete empirical instances” (p.293).

6.7.11 Conceptual categories

Following an iterative period of coding, memoing and of theoretically sampling as part of constant comparison four categories were constructed, each comprised of a number of sub-categories (Table 1).

Table 1. Categories and the sub-categories

Category	Sub-categories
FE College site “Just like school”	• Shireland College teaching and learning culture • Subject and teacher training/CPD Scholarship and research • Library, teaching spaces and resources
College Management “Big Brother”	• Surveillance • Information control • Performativity and auditing
HE in FE teachers “Busking it”	• Time • Academic qualifications and subject knowledge • Teaching experience, teacher training and CPD • Teacher identity and agency
HE in FE students “Lacking autonomy”	• Previous study experiences pre-HE, independence and autonomy • Student expectations of studying at HE • Teacher Expectations of HE students’

When considering how to construct my categories, I followed Morse (2008) and her advice to ensure categories encompassed “a collection of similar data sorted into the same place” (p.727). Following categorisation, the characteristics and essence of the category can then be defined and explored in relation to other categories as part of the ultimate goal to construct a substantive theoretical account of a particular phenomenon. As part of this process I sought to construct categories which related to concrete data grounded in the research site, as well as taking into account unseen processes (Moss, 2016). These categories reflect the data, rather than being pre-formed categories into which data was forced to fit, and “explicate ideas, events or processes in your data – and do so in telling words " (Charmaz, 2006, p.91), thereby giving categories distinct properties, i.e. “the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.117).

According to Glaser (2014), constructing categories is “a trial and error effort documented in the memos” (p.45). This was indeed the case for me. It was an arduous and sometimes tormented process as I struggled to find the right ‘fit’ for my codes. The names of the categories include in vivo codes. Including them, as well as using more obvious and descriptive nomenclature, helped to bring the voices of the participants right into the heart of the data interpretation. Their use of language also added vibrancy and a more resonant ‘handle’ for readers to grasp.

6.7.12 From categories to a substantive CGT

Categories are not theory per se; rather they are “conceptual element[s] in a theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.37). In the following chapter the products of my analysis, i.e. my categories are presented and theoretically explored in turn. In order to enhance the trustworthiness and confirmability of my findings, excerpts from interview transcripts are included in order to illuminate my thinking behind decisions made regarding the creation of codes and categories, as well as other detail I deemed to be worthy of note at that time. Further, interview transcripts extracts serves to give voice to my participants by representing them and their words in vivo, as a means of empowering this distinctive group of educators to be ‘heard’ (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). Their inclusion helps me to meet ethical researcher obligations to “describe the experiences of others in the most faithful way possible” (Munhall, 2001, p.540).

6.8 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter I have sought to articulate my rationale for adopting a practice sensitised CGT. In considering philosophical positioning and my research aims, I argue that the research design and concomitant methods were appropriate for answering my research question. The following chapter discusses my interpretive analysis of the four conceptual categories.

Chapter 7: Interpretative Analysis

7.1 Interpretative analysis of the four theoretical categories

Within this chapter each of the categories are presented and analytically interpreted. I specifically sought to present my interpretative findings in a way that made the connection to the research question and broader aims, as clear as possible. Following Charmaz (2011), my analysis reflects my memos and has not been subject to the influence of other literature (other than that pertaining to theoretical sensitivity as discussed earlier). Rather, integrating my analytic interpretations with literature comes later in the discussion chapter.

The actualities of writing and how best to frame and present my work was incredibly difficult. How might I re-assemble the codes and chunks of data into a meaningful and theoretic story, which would both best characterise and resonate with my participants? Initially I simply could not reconcile my data with constructing a CGT, and it left me in stasis for months as I tried to unpick why I was unable to move forward. After a great deal of reading, re-reading, thinking and reflecting, I eventually came to realise that it was the notion of theorising that was my 'Achilles Heel'.

When approaching the write up, I was plagued with questions about existing theory and where and how I needed to use it. Surely if I merely presented my categories, this would be nothing more than a descriptive 'shopping list'? How could it be anything analytical or 'theoretical'? Eventually I came across Goulding (1998) who remarked that "contrary to popular belief, grounded theory research is not 'atheoretical' but requires an understanding of related theory and empirical work in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity" (p.52). My philosophical position, disciplinary background and theoretical sensitivity would, and did, drive my approach to what to look at and what to ask. In turn, they would inform my thinking, my abstraction, my memoing and my interpretations. I would be constructing theory through theorising in

an interpretivist sense, rather than theorising from a positivist sense. My constant comparison and memos and the thinking that had contributed to them was my theorising. Research into HE in FE in this way was uncharted territory. I would be constructing new theoretical renderings of a neglected and under-theorised research area. Even though I had articulated justifications for adopting CGT to myself and to others, many times, it was at this stage in the doctoral study that things 'fell into place'. I looked again to Charmaz (2011) and this time, her conception of theorising finally made sense to me:

> The acts involved in theorizing foster seeing possibilities, establishing connections, and asking questions… When you theorize, you reach down to fundamentals, up to abstractions, and probe into experience. The content of theorizing cuts to the core of studied life and poses new questions about it…. constructing theory is not a mechanical process. Theoretical playfulness enters in. Whimsy and wonder can lead you to see the novel in the mundane. (pp.135–136)

It was at this 'light bulb moment' that I felt that my decision to use CGT to was truly justified. I *was* able to construct meaningful theoretical renderings. My background afforded me the sensitivity and insight required to be able to carry out a CGT study. Kenny and Fourie (2015) remind CGT researchers of Charmaz's caution that becoming too immersed in the literature can be at the expense of remaining creative in the analysis and interpretation process. Instead, CGT researchers are advised to use their own theoretical sensitivity first, and only write up literature reviews and discussions after the conclusion of the initial analysis phase. My positive outlook was reinforced by Bainbridge et al. (2013) who called for new CGT researchers to 'trust their instincts' when feeling "rudderless—in uncharted waters… not knowing exactly what you are [I was] looking for" (p.283). Having gained new understandings and reached a place where I felt confident, I was able to fully interpret the categories that I had constructed. The following sections of the chapter discuss each category in detail.

Each of the four categories and its constituent parts are conceptually related (Birks and Mills, 2015), with each category accounting for factors that contribute to the way in which HE teacher pedagogic practice is enacted at Shireland College:

- FE College site “Just like school”
- College Management “Big Brother”
- HE in FE teachers “Busking it”
- HE in FE students “Lacking autonomy”.

This construction is directly linked to the research question, i.e.

> *When teaching HE at Shireland College, what do these HE in FE teachers do, how do they do it, and why?*

Given the complexity and interconnectivity of factors that contribute to the way in which practice was enacted, some overlap is inevitable in the categories and my subsequent interpretive analysis and theorising of them. Using ‘time’ as an example, I have included it within the “*Busking it*” category, because participants cited the lack of time as being a major contributory factor with regard to the way in which they were able to plan, research, and ultimately, teach HE sessions. Time was also tied up in the *College Management “Big Brother”* category from the point of view of the way in which the management viewed teachers’ time, and who had claims on it. Having read widely about GT, I took the words of Strauss and Corbin (1998) to confirm that this was an acceptable approach to take. As they stated, “Theorising is the act of constructing ... from data an explanatory scheme that systematically integrates various concepts through statements of relationship” (p.25). I argue that the interconnectivity of particular concepts demonstrates how complex HE teacher practice enactments are, and is in itself a systematic integration. To foster understanding of teacher practice at Shireland College, the following analysis

involves conceptual interpretation and explication of the data in order to illustrate how the categories and all of the key factors and themes are related.

The visual diagram summarises the categories and sub-categories (Figure 9), but is not presented as a substitute of my narrative rendering of my findings. Rather, it serves to provide a simple, summative visual representation of my findings as a means of prefacing my interpretative analysis of them. Each of the categories will be discussed in full later within this chapter (section 7.2).

Each category name is taken from an in vivo code used by one or more of the participants. As discussed (sub-section 6.7.11), in vivo language was used to "prioritize and honor the participants' voice[s]" (Saldaña, 2009, p.80). Using actual participant language means readers are "more likely to capture the meanings inherent in people's experience" (Stringer, 2014, p.140).

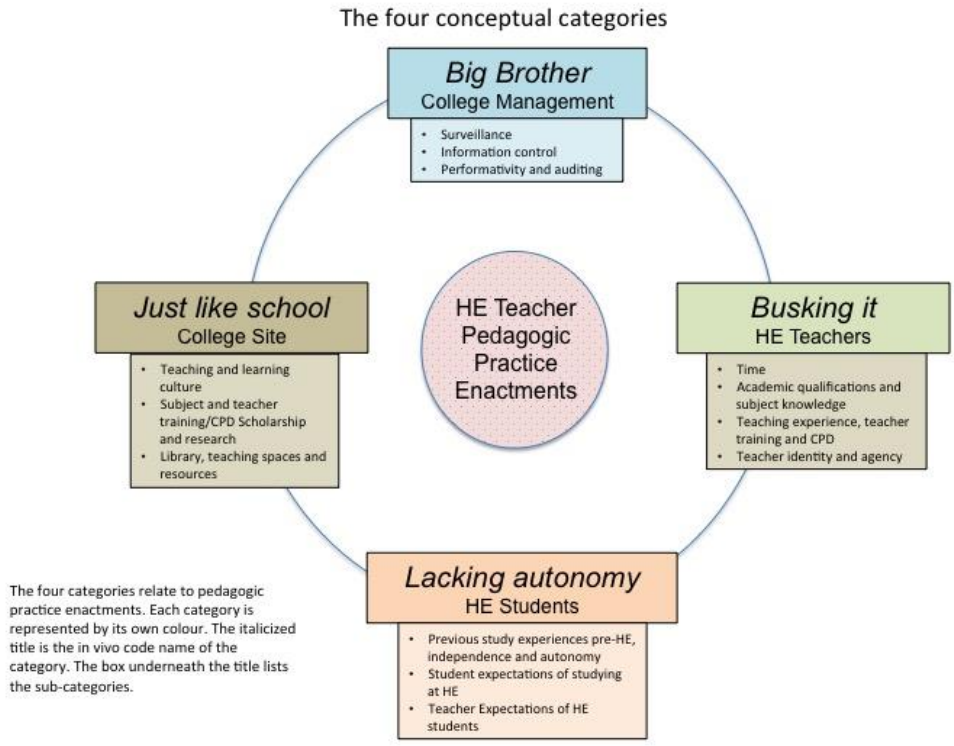

Figure 9. Categories representing factors which influence HE practice enactments

For clarity, each of the categories is summarised thus:

1. **FE College site "Just like school"** – this represents Shireland College as a site; a place in which there are established norms and traditions for understanding and enacting teaching and learning practices. This includes the vocational nature of landbased programmes at the college. Within this category, key contributory factors influencing HE teacher practice enactment are presented.
2. **College Management "Big Brother"** – this denotes the management approach at Shireland College and how it enables, constrains and influences HE teacher practice enactments are presented.
3. **HE in FE teachers "Busking it"** – this characterizes the complex range of factors which contribute to HE teachers' conceptions of HE and how their practice enactments are enabled, constrained and influenced by their sense of identity as an HE teacher.
4. **HE in FE students "Lacking autonomy"** – this represents perceived abilities and attitudes of HE students at Shireland College and how HE teacher practice enactments are enabled, constrained and influenced by the nature of the HE students, and by teachers' expectations of them.

7.2 FE College site "*Just like school*"

This category was constructed in order to reflect a number of concepts and themes that were connected to Shireland College itself, i.e. as a site; a physical and intersubjective space with humans, animals and material, non-human artefacts. Considering notions of practice and my sensitivity to it (Chapter 4, section 4.1), part of the thinking behind constructing this category derived from ideas about Shireland College as a physical entity and space in which the HE teachers enacted their HE practice. Not as an inert container, rather a specific milieu where the HE teachers co-

existed both with their teacher colleagues and everyone and everything else, be it human and non-human.

Using Schatzkian definitions, I considered the site in terms of being “an arena or set of phenomena that surrounds or immerses something and enjoys powers of determination with respect to it” (2005, p.468). As part of this notion of site, I recalled Schatzki’s ideas about people’s practice not simply being determined by themselves as an individual. Rather, practice and actions were bound up with the specific social context in which individuals operated alongside human and non-human others. As a corollary to this, teacher practice can, therefore be linked to locally understood rules and practical understandings. Kemmis et al. (2014a) refer to this as being “the way we do things around here” (p.67). Similarly, Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) suggest these understandings can be “invisible – taken for granted as ‘the way things are’” (p.38). I took these notions to then consider the accepted views and practices of staff and students at Shireland College, with respect to teaching and learning in its widest sense, and how this was broadly constituted and organised. These were then represented within this category as a way of rendering my interpretive analysis regarding the interplay between a predominantly FE site and, “the way things are” (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008, p.38), with the specific pedagogic practices of HE teachers.

The name of the category; “*Just like school”* was an in vivo code expressed by a number of the teacher participants about how they perceived the college culture and working practices to be akin to. Having had prolonged exposure to the site during my data collection phase, I was struck by the school like atmosphere and felt that the in vivo code captured the overall ‘feel’ of the college, as well as the prevailing attitude towards students, teaching and learning.

Whilst a number of potentially interesting research avenues opened up during the data collection, my interpretive analysis focused only upon those that were related to my research question. As such, I focused on the site of Shireland College and how it affected or influenced HE teacher practice enactments. In accordance with CGT tenets I remained focused upon the active process of HE teaching (Charmaz, 2014). The category is constructed in order to reflect three recurring concepts that surfaced during the data collection, namely:

- Shireland College teaching and learning culture
- Subject and teacher training/ CPD/ scholarship and research
- Library, teaching spaces and resources.

The decision to begin the presentation of my interpretive analysis with the Shireland College teaching and learning culture as the first category, i.e. "*Just like school"*, was deliberate. I contend that the site and its 'powers of determination' foregrounds the remaining three categories. The culture forms a backdrop against which all teaching is conceived and enacted by all teachers at Shireland College. The college culture ensures teachers and staff (and students) understand teaching and learning from a particular perspective. It is this perspective which plays a part in impacting upon the abilities of the HE teachers to be able to effectively and confidently enact HE pedagogic practices (which will be discussed in more detail in the other categories).

7.2.1 Shireland College teaching and learning culture

The significance of the site in influencing teachers' HE pedagogic practice enactments is presented via a number of key themes voiced by participants:

- FE culture
- Staff availability culture

- Complaint culture
- Staffing, timetabling, and teaching hours.

Within this sub-section I present a pen portrait of Shireland College as a means of providing a sense of the culture at the college. To foreground this sub-section, I frame culture as referring to customs, norms, values, understandings, behaviours, expectations and assumptions that characterise Shireland College (Sergiovanni and Corbally, 1984; Owens and Steinhoff, 1989). These are often unspoken, taken-for-granted shared ways of doing and understanding that are based upon tradition and the history of the college. As such, this understanding is shared across staff and students.

Shireland College is principally an FE college focused on teaching vocational skills and preparing students for craft and technician level employment in the landbased sector. Many of its students are socially disadvantaged, having struggled with school, or are those who are returning to study in adulthood. Further, many might be termed to be non-traditional and/or from widening participation (WP) backgrounds. This is the shared understanding of those within the college. Most of the teachers are vocationally orientated by virtue of having worked or professionally engaged in one or more landbased sectors, with many of the teachers having previously been (or remained active as) veterinary nurses, gardeners or riding instructors. Further, the college adopted a generalist rather than specialist teacher model. As such, teachers were expected to teach anything in and around (and sometimes beyond) a cognate group of subjects/topics within their broad area of knowledge. As an example, Alison taught Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with modules including science, business, GCSEs, practical animal handling and study skills. As such, this generalist and vocational model connects to the identity of the teachers (and the students) and is discussed in

more detail in the "*Busking it"* category (section 7.4). It is my contention that the culture normalizes practices and expectations about teaching and being a teacher.

This interpretative analysis chapter presents HE teachers who are operating in a culture where 'hand-holding' and nurturing is expected in order to best support students who often lack autonomy and independence. Aside from supporting vulnerable students, the 'hand-holding' also serves to maintain the overarching expectation that retaining students is essential. Indeed, there was an acceptance and shared understanding amongst teachers that high student retention and achievement rates were a personal responsibility for teachers. Losing students for whatever reason was an on-going concern for the teacher participants. Further, the college culture views teachers as generalists rather than as experts, with the expectation that teachers can teach a wide-ranging and often diverse range of subjects. These teachers are trained to teach the broad range of students that FE attracts. The formal and compulsory teacher training provided is not orientated towards HE. Similarly, no formal time or resource provision for HE teachers to engage in research or scholarly activity exists.

In contrast, teaching HE, researching and engaging in scholarship were not viewed as being mainstream activities into which all stakeholders at the college had a sense of a shared understanding and appreciation. It is with regard to this disconnect that the HE teacher participants expressed concern, with participants citing frustration and anxiety about their perceived inability to be able to deflect or disrupt the force of FE culture. Further, the prevailing culture was not considered to be conducive to enabling an HE culture to develop within or alongside the FE culture, resulting in HE staff feeling misunderstood, inadequate and under pressure.

7.2.2 The FE culture at Shireland College

What was clear from the data was the sense that, perhaps not unsurprisingly, FE dominated the culture and set the tone of the college. Ninety per cent of the students were studying on an FE course and were under 18. When asked to describe the college and its students, Hermione was unequivocal in her view:

> "FE students are children, they are under 18. It's really like a school. Teachers are expected to be a good role model for the young students. It's safe and PC and risk free and that's how it's run. Everything is constrained by health and safety. I can't even take a cup of tea onto the yard, it is ridiculous"

When I asked Hermione what she meant by being a role model, she remarked:

> "Like being polite and organised and calm. They have behaviour issues with lots of the students here so we have to be all calm and professional at all times. You have to be reserved around them. You can't have a bit of a laugh and joke with them and talk to them more as adults. Tut, tut! [laughs]. I got in trouble once for saying 'bugger' in a practical with some FEs. That went straight back to XXX [HE lead] and I got told off. 'It's not professional, you have to show them the way to behave. We don't want them swearing so we have to set an example'. It does mean I have to watch what I say. I can't be myself. I can't put my personality into things. I can see where she's coming from to a certain extent but honestly, it just keeps them as children doesn't it? And it's tedious having to watch my Ps and Qs all the time"

When Sally was asked to describe the college and its students she reiterated the behaviour issues the college faced:

> "This place is about training these students [FE] to get their basic skills and practical skills up and go out to work in the animal industry. They usually have some issues, you know baggage from school, and we get a fair bit of behaviour and disruption to deal with. We probably have more than our fair share of learning disabilities, dyslexia, dyspraxia, that sort of thing so I suppose you could say they are quite *challenging* [italics for emphasis]"

These comments chimed with what I had observed during my data collection. Most of the FE classes had interruptions and low-level discipline issues throughout. All of the teacher participants appeared to deal with it in a similar way; namely with a very

directed and quite authoritarian manner. When I asked about this approach, Sally said:

> "The thing is you have to be really clear and firm with them [FE students]. If you give them an inch they'd be all over you. Some of it's a safety thing – I can't have them running amuck on the yard with horses around. So I suppose I do go instructor mode a lot of the time when I talk to them. Then it's clear. 'You need to do it like this', 'you have to do that in X number of minutes'. If you don't spell it out and give them tight boundaries then it can all go to pot"

When I asked Sally what she meant by 'going to pot', she further explained:

> "If students play up it's a nightmare for all sorts of reasons. Mainly because I end up shouting at them and trying to restore order. It's such a waste of time. But particularly because of managements' Ofsted obsession. You know they do little unplanned observations where they just pop up for sometimes literally just minutes to see what's going on. Trust me you don't want any rioting going on if that happens. Keeping things tight makes it easier for me"

I was struck by her comment about not wanting rioting if there was the chance of it coinciding of a management unplanned observation. It appeared to be loaded with meaning. When I asked her what she meant she explained:

> "To be honest it is quite heavy on the management here you know? There's a lot of checking and seeing what's going on. Of course they don't say it outwardly, its not like 'we are checking on you' but we know it. We know they are watching. I feel like it's kinda dressed up as them caring about us and wanting us to be even more brilliant teachers [laughs] you know, to drive up standards and stuff. There's always people watching and looking. They are paranoid students will go or won't pass and then they lose the funding. The student is the cash cow. No doubt about it. I think because of the number of challenging students we have they worry there's more chance of losing them? Because quite a lot of them probably should be somewhere else. College is a bit too much for some of them. We know management will take steps if you're not keeping the students happy. They want a happy ship with happy students who pass"

Sally's comments suggested teachers all shared understandings of the importance of retaining students. Importantly, this understanding extended to teachers facing consequences if they failed to maintain a 'happy ship'. When I asked Pat about retaining students, her response was revealing:

> "The pressure to retain students is really felt by everyone here. Students equal money. I do think that's it really. No money, no college. It sounds a bit dramatic but I think the management really think that. Maybe the place is struggling financially? I don't know. But I know I feel students have to stay and pass. We've got to see them through to the end. I do have concerns about the pressure to pass and to keep the figures up. If stats go down then, as course director, I will be hauled in"

Unlike in other institutions where the responsibility to retain students and to ensure their success might be shouldered collectively by a course team or a department, Pat's comment appeared to suggest a more individual and personal responsibly to ensure students stayed and passed. When I asked what she meant by being 'hauled in', Pat explained:

> "It'll be in with [XXX senior manager]. It hasn't happened to me. I know a few it has happened to. A bollocking and a 'buck your ideas up' by the sounds of it. The thing is, it's like it's *your* fault [italics for emphasis] if they don't pass or drop out. Never mind their life, their special needs, them being lazy and crap. Irrelevant. You are the course director so you need to fix them. How can I do that? It stresses me out. I can't make them come and sit down and listen and learn. But management just want to say tick, that's another one through, X percentage retention and achievement"

Pat was quite perturbed about the stress she felt she was under to maintain acceptable retention and achievement figures. When I asked if she believed this stress was felt by fellow teacher colleagues she was unequivocal:

> "I know in our area that it's something we are worried about. If students are absent for more than a few days you get that 'oh God where are they' feeling. From what I see and hear I think we all [teachers] feel it"

Finally, a further recurring comment concerned the colleges mission to develop practical, work ready students for the landbased sector:

> "The college is really hot on employability. We are always told to make sure students can do the job in practice, not just in theory. We have good employer links and they are always telling us that they want 'doers'. Most of the students leave here to work in places like catteries and pet shops, so it's hands on stuff. A big part of FE teaching is to equip them with good practical skills. And industry speed too. We have had employers complaining about

> students being too slow to muck out. So that's the emphasis, be ready to work. They've got to be knowledgeable of course but they have got to be competent"

From my prolonged engagement at the college I was struck by the school and school teacher 'feel'. In my memos I noted many incidences where all of the teacher participants had reprimanded students (both FE and HE) for transgressions like sitting and blocking corridors, being noisy or not paying attention in class. I recalled Hermione's reference to the under 18s as being children, rather than young adults. I sensed that there was a feeling amongst teaching staff that they were dealing with children. As a result, their manner towards students tended to be authoritarian if admonishing them, but more mothering when otherwise engaging with them. I had noted how the teacher participants often referred to the students as 'my girls' and 'my lovelies'. I also noted that many of the teachers (both participants and others I came across during site walks and informal observations) were quite patronizing. I did not sense a relationship where teachers and students were partners in learning; where students' voices were sought and necessarily valued. There appeared to be a culture of teachers telling and instructing, not asking or inviting comment, challenge or reflection.

When I asked Caroline if the nature of FE culture impacted upon her HE work she explained:

> "I suppose it's drummed in to us to mother them a bit. Students need lots of looking after. Half the time its sorting stuff about bus passes and fights they've had with their friends. I suppose it's what we have to do. It's what we are expected to do. That's FE isn't it? If I don't and students fail or complain then it's a problem isn't it?"

I interpreted this as evidencing the FE culture and the expectation of teachers to treat their students in a particular way. When I asked if this was an approach she used with her HE students, Caroline commented:

> "Probably a bit if I'm honest. The thing is I suppose I am a bit on autopilot when I talk to students. It's a constant blur of going from one class to the next so I don't necessarily think about who they are, just that they are students and need sorting out. I am a bit mumsy and I probably don't differentiate between them as much as I could. I hear myself sometimes and think 'aaagh! Stop! Let them sort their own stuff'. Lots of our HE students have come from FE so they are used to it. I think they like loads of guidance. I think I probably think it's a safe bet to help them and sort things out for them. I can't always trust students [HE] to do things. If I do it, it's done. Then its one less thing to worry about"

These remarks were indicative of the force of the FE culture and its reach. Caroline suggested that the expectation to look after her HE students was foreshadowed by concerns over there being 'problems' if students failed or complained. Despite acknowledging that her 'mumsy' approach to her HE students was not necessarily appropriate, she appeared unable to stop. The ability for her to manage her students to lessen her own worries over-rode her feelings that her approach was not necessarily appropriate.

With regard to Ofsted and managements' 'obsession', Sally's earlier comment was not isolated. I had informal conversations with a number of teachers (aside from the teacher participants) who revealed how the college culture aspired to achieving excellence, and that Ofsted was seen as being the primary indicator for having achieved it. What was evident was the shared understanding amongst all of the teachers I spoke with about the necessity for them to be Ofsted Grade 1 or 2 teachers. Similarly, there appeared to be shared understanding that all students should be work ready and practically able to enter a hands-on, vocational job. Interestingly, teachers spoke of *training* students, not of teaching or educating them. Particularly amongst FE teachers I informally spoke with, there was no mention of the college being academic in any way. The shared language was that of skills, training and employability.

Reflecting upon these issues I returned to my research question to ask if this FE college culture and the unspoken shared understandings associated with it, impacted upon the HE practice enactments of the teacher participants. From my observations of FE and HE classes and irrespective of the level, the predominant pedagogic practice was one where the teacher directed and led the sessions. This was particularly noticeable during practical classes, where there appeared to be no differentiation between FE and HE. The emphasis was on teacher demonstration followed by repeat opportunities (under teacher supervision) for students to practice a particular technique. There was limited extension, additional questioning or challenging orthodoxies with the HE students. Instead, the pedagogic practices appeared to create a rather surface and didactic approach to teaching.

I interpreted this as having a number of causes; the challenging nature of many of the FE students included behaviour problems, and a lack of concentration and motivation in class. Teachers did not feel able to trust students to be more independent and participatory. Rather, keeping the lessons very directed appeared to mitigate against this. It also served to avoid censure should a lesson be subject to an unannounced management spot check. The potential for management censure if student pass rates dropped appeared to be widely understood, as well as being a source of stress for the teachers.

It appeared that the way in which teachers understood teaching was by virtue of shared understandings and of shared language. The mother tongue of Shireland College was FE. There was common acceptance of understanding of what FE was and how it should be taught. In contrast, I sensed this was not the case with HE. As Pat commented:

> "The bottom line is that the way this place runs is about teaching, teaching, teaching. It's all the same. No-one differentiates between HE or FE. Everyone teaches FE so that's what we all know. Everyone knows about the awarding

> bodies and how FE works. But HE is hardly done by anyone so no-one really appreciates that it's different and needs a different way of organising it. It's in a minority. I feel a bit like that too"

Pat's comment appeared to imply that there was a general understanding amongst staff at the college about what FE was and what it needed in terms of planning, staffing and teaching. The universal familiarity with FE was akin to staff knowing the rules of engagement for FE. In contrast, Pat implied HE came with a different set of rules and a language that appeared only to be spoken and understood by a limited few. If few were speaking HE, and they were novice speakers themselves who were not necessarily learning it from an experienced and fluent speaker, how would the HE teachers be able to effectively master the language and rules of engagement for HE? How would the taken-for-granted and everyday HE parlance of critical thinking, autonomous learning, research and SoTL become mainstream within Shireland College?

I detected the minority status was a concern; I detected something of an outsider identity. As Pat further explained:

> "If we do ever try and say HE is different there's always a bit of a raised eyebrow thing going on from FE colleagues, like 'oh really, what makes you so special?'. And we have extra work because of having to keep college and XXX university [validating partner university] happy. There's never any realisation of that from anyone outside of the HE team"

Pat's remark was revealing about not only the culture, but the relationships between FE and HE teachers. The 'raised eyebrow' response from the FE teachers was significant, exposing a tension between FE and HE in relation to status. It appeared that some FE teachers perceived HE teachers' assertion that HE was different as meaning it was somehow special or deserving of preferential treatment. I interpreted this as them not having a shared understanding of what HE was. Without a culture where an understanding prevailed, HE appeared to be viewed with suspicion by some FE teachers. The way in which this suspicion manifested itself is discussed in

more detail in the "*Busking it"* category (section 7.4). For now it is sufficient to note that the lack of understanding of HE from those not involved in teaching it, resulted in a great deal of anxiety for the HE teacher participants.

7.2.3 Staff availability

A further aspect of the Shireland College teaching and learning culture regarded staff availability. This manifested itself in two ways: availability for seeing students, and availability to cover for staff absence. Participants reported how there was an expectation that all staff had to be on campus from 8.30am – 4.45pm irrespective of their timetable. As Jane explained:

> "We have to be on hand all the time. Students like to track you down to ask you things. You can't escape them. They know they can come any time and we will help them. We have to help them. It's expected I suppose. Part of being a good FE teacher is being there to support the students. That's what we are told [by management]"

When I asked if she could work at home or come and go when she was not teaching, Jane explained:

> "No way. When I had not been here that long I had a free afternoon and loads of marking I had picked up from someone who was off sick. Rather than leave at normal time and hit the traffic, it would be more efficient to go early, get back and do my marking at home without interruptions. So I asked XXX [line manager] but was told no. It's just not how things are here. She [line manager] said 'what if one of your students needs you? You have a responsibility to them to be here'. What could I say to that?"

The staff presenteeism and student support culture was also raised as a concern by Hermione:

> "It's ingrained here…students are customers so we've got to be here and be attentive to them. It's like a 24/7 service to keep them all happy. I don't think it's right because it makes students demanding and needy. I really have a problem with it for the HE students. I've said to XXX [HE lead] I think allowing them [HE students] to come any time they like doesn't help to get them to be more independent. I asked XXX [HE lead] if HE students should have office hours like I did in university. You know to get them to plan and prioritise their

> work and make proper use of time with me. Otherwise they do the usual FE thing of turning up unannounced and gut spilling. Anyway, I was told no. It was important that all students were treated the same. It wasn't *fair* [italics for emphasis] if HE had less access. I think it's not less access but more training them to be more grown up and to book appointments to have more academic and professional meetings about their studies. So we keep on with the FE mentality and the bum wiping instead"

Both Jane and Hermione vividly painted a picture of how the college culture viewed students, i.e. as customers who needed to be attended to. There appeared to be a shared understanding that teachers should be on hand to see students whenever it was necessary. Similarly, the management maintained the idea that being on campus was expected and part of the job of a good FE teacher. Indeed, I interpreted the management to consider not being available for students to be a dereliction of duty. As part of this I wondered if the constant worry about losing students (expressed previously by Sally) was related to the insistence that staff be available to see students at any time. There also appeared to be no recognition that, given the nature of undergraduate study, HE students might require a different and arguably, more 'grown up' approach to support. Rather, the inability to accommodate the different needs and expectations between the FE and HE students was justified in terms of 'fairness', rather than on academic and intellectual needs.

Aside from needing to be on campus for their students, the culture at Shireland also included staff being available to cover for staff absence:

> "Teaching must happen here, nothing can be cancelled, so if someone is off and you're free you get landed with babysitting someone's class. It is like being a school supply teacher or something. I have covered all sorts of things. When I did my degree if the lecturer was off, that was it, it was cancelled. I preferred that to some random person reading the PowerPoint's and not having a clue. But here it's like the show must go on. They'll wheel anyone out to stand in front of a class and you don't get any say. You can't say no, you just have to do as you are told and get on with it" (Jane)

The expectation that staff could be deployed by the management at any time, to cover classes was indicative of the teaching and learning culture. As Jane had said,

teaching could not be cancelled, even if it meant using a teacher to cover it without the requisite expertise. Reflecting upon this and the research question, I concluded that the shared understanding amongst teachers about always being available impacted upon the autonomy and agency an HE teacher in a university setting might reasonably expect to enjoy.

7.2.4 Complaint culture

During the interviews with participants, all of them described a complaint culture. This appeared to derive from a number of sources; students, employers and parents. In combination, concerns about receiving complaints were voiced by all of the participants. The ultimate concern was that they could face censure from management if complaints had been made about them. Correspondingly, they acknowledged that their approach to teaching (both FE and HE) was mindful of this risk, with strategies employed to lessen its impact. Caroline explained:

> "Here there's a constant barrage from students and parents which makes it a difficult environment to function in"

Similarly Alison explained:

> "Because the place is very small and groups are small, students moan but it gets amplified. If it was bigger and there were 100s of students the moaners would be drowned out I think. But here they complain and we all have to jump. We have to keep them happy"

Hermione described how the complaints culture affected her and her teaching:

> "We get complaints from students, particularly FE all the time. I have no idea why but it's the culture here but they are allowed to and I feel I am walking on politically correct eggshells. The college see them [students] as clients and they are always right. I feel like a customer service person sometimes, not a lecturer. The FEs are very immature and always running off to complain if staff have been horrible to them or if other students are being horrible to them. You know, 'They're picking on me blah, blah', 'she said my riding isn't good enough to pass Stage 1' [professional riding exam]. Honestly it's so wearing. The big problem for me is that so many HE students come up from FE so there's an ingrained culture of low level whinging. It's easier to moan

> isn't it? Blame someone else for your marks or your work experience report. I have learned that it's better not to give them things to moan about. I do sometimes avoid certain activities or skirt around some parts of the course because they'll find it hard and moan about. It's easier and gives me less of a headache"

With regard to employers, Jane described how employers complain to the college if students cannot carry out particular tasks to their satisfaction:

> "A practice manager … will phone the Head of Veterinary Nursing and say 'My student says you didn't cover Point 1A 2 on the syllabus and they didn't get a worksheet on that' and I will get summoned and it's like 'whoa', they might not have … and I always say to mine [students], 'you've got to read around and it's your responsibility ultimately', but it's very like they want to see that you've covered every last little thing, dot every I and cross every T"

In terms of effects upon her teaching, Jane was clear:

> "After a few trips to the boss I worked out drrrr [laughing], give them [students] absolutely everything to make sure I can cover myself if employers complain. I found it quite tough though because the immediate assumption here is that I have done something wrong. You know? That I am a bad teacher because I have not taught it properly? There's never anything from the boss to say 'well, we all know that's a hard module' or 'you've got a weak group there'. No. It's a bit of a blame thing"

Reflecting upon these remarks, it was clear that the culture whereby employers, managers, parents and students would complain if they considered that the teaching or support provided was not appropriate, did affect the way in which participants operated. I interpreted the inference of poor teaching as being an assault on teacher confidence. It was telling how Jane used language such as 'blame' and 'tough' and assumptions of the teacher being at fault.

The climate of concern about management censure meant teachers protected themselves by providing students with a wealth of support materials to evidence that it had been taught properly. As a result, some students who had progressed from FE to HE at the college continued into HE with an expectation of receiving the same amount and type of support and resources as received during their FE studies.

Teachers also avoided or played down particular activities that they felt were more likely to result in complaints.

Together with having to be on campus at all times to be available for students, the complaints culture affected teacher agency and eroded confidence. As a result, approaches to teaching acknowledged adopting strategies to lessen the chance of being complained about and receiving management censure.

7.2.5 Staffing, teaching hours and timetabling

In common with FECs within the sector, the college adopted a model of generalist teachers, not those with a very specific and narrow specialism. As such, teachers have expertise in a broad subject area, i.e. equine studies, but are expected to be able to achieve a relatively all-encompassing coverage of subject elements, rather than focusing on one or two key areas. This includes teaching across the range of course academic levels. At Shireland teachers were contracted for 860 hours per annum (approx.). No remission or allowance was made for any HE teaching hours. An informal meeting with a member of the management team confirmed the position of the college and its view that teachers could and should be able to teach across a range of courses:

> "Part of the richness of our provision comes from the diversity and range of skills and subjects our staff can teach. We think it is a real strength that many of our teachers can teach entry level up to HE. We are here to provide a wide range of skills and knowledge to our students and our teachers need to be able to teach across the range to give our students to the best experience we can. We want our students to be work ready and able to thrive in a dynamic environment. We believe we can only achieve this if we have flexible and adaptable staff" (Shireland College manager)

Discussions with the participants revealed how they felt the generalist model, coupled with the teaching hours, did not align with their HE work:

> "The thing about this place is that it's all about being a Jack of all Trades. At planning days XXX [college director] always mentions how FE is so good at

> being able to teach anything to anyone at any time. I call this the Martini Model! I don't think he sees FE and HE as different. I routinely flit from a bit of event management to some riding and back to some first aid all in a day. For FE that's bread and butter stuff and my degree covers all that. But that's where it stops. I know some in-depth things from my degree, things I did in final year. But that's pretty narrow. It doesn't mean I can teach nutrition and animal law and anthrozoology in the proper depth at level 5"

This generalist approach appeared to be one that indicated an established expectation of teachers and teaching at the college. It also highlighted concerns about having sufficient knowledge to extend the generalist model into HE work. Caroline explained how she felt about teaching across many different courses and subject areas:

> "It can be a bit of a nightmare. Because there are not many of us it means we do to teach outside of things we really know about and feel comfortable about. There's a bit of a staff turnover problem here, which adds to the mix. Some people do come and go quite quickly so things are a bit all over the place with who is here and who's doing what. That makes me feel a bit on edge. Like nothing's ever solid and reliable. I can ride it out for FE because it's pretty straightforward stuff, I feel I can take whatever is thrown at me. But I do worry that things come a bit unstuck for HE you know? There's a limit to have much I feel I can get away with"

It appeared that the small course teams amplified the issue of teaching beyond individual knowledge and skillsets. This appeared to be compounded by the concern about staff turnover. Caroline appeared to be genuinely worried about teaching beyond her expertise. When I asked if this impacted upon her HE teaching Caroline admitted:

> "I suppose it does sometimes. I don't know everything...I can't. I suppose when I'm a bit vague on things I stick to a simple session. I don't want to trip myself up by saying stuff that's wrong or going to confuse me or the students. I don't like doing that, but sometimes I have no choice. It's not always like that but I think it's made worse by not always having a say about what I teach"

Caroline's admission of keeping lessons simple did resonate with some of the HE classes I had observed. A number of the classes I had seen were difficult to differentiate by level (RQF qualification levels). There had been a tendency towards

knowledge transmission and a teacher centered pedagogic approach for HE. Given Caroline's concern about 'getting away with it', I interpreted lack of knowledge as being a factor that contributed to the HE pedagogic approach adopted in some circumstances (this is discussed in more detail in the "*Busking it"* category, section 7.4).

A further concern for HE teachers regarded timetabling and allocation of teaching modules. This arose from Caroline's comment about not always having a say about what she taught. Further exploration with the participants revealed how timetabling created problems for them as HE teachers. As a consequence of it being minority provision, HE was timetabled in order to fit around the larger and more complicated FE timetable. This revealed a situation where teachers were sometimes allocated HE teaching simply because they were free at the time the class was scheduled for, and they had teaching hours to fill. They were not always consulted to discuss if they had the requisite knowledge or interest to teach it.

This situation was compounded by participants only teaching a module for one semester or academic year, before it might be allocated to someone else. As Pat remarked:

> "Management justify the chopping and changing, teach everything like a Jack of all Trade by telling me how we all need to versatile and its more interesting for us to teach different things. Like it will be a challenge or fun or something? It's laughable really that they think that sort of reason is going to wash. But that's FE for you. Just do whatever to whoever. But it leaves me constantly having to play catch up and having to go back to the drawing board to write new stuff all the time"

It appeared that this approach meant teachers did not necessarily have the opportunity to repeat a module to test out the best approaches and resources. When I asked Pat if she felt this impacted upon her HE teaching she was resolute in her response:

> "I know it does. Every time it's a new module I need to do loads of reading and research to work out what I am going to do and what lectures to prepare. It's even worse when it's a topic that's not in my comfort zone. That all takes time. Lots of time that I don't have. I am quite new to teaching. I haven't got loads of PowerPoint's already written that I can just pull out and use. And you don't get allowances for teaching HE. It needs a heck of lot more prep than FE does. I have to try and find journals and up to date materials. So I have to use my evenings and weekends to do that kind of thing. There's nothing built into the system to allow for this"

Pat went on to explain how some of her HE pedagogic practices were directed affected by this:

> "If I am short of time and it's not my area then I do have to compromise I suppose. Like making sure I focus on essentials and what do they need to know for the assessments. I do go more towards sticking to the facts more than anything more, you know, where we might have a discussion or something. I don't feel confident to do that if it's topics I am not that familiar or experienced with"

When considering how this impacted upon how pedagogic practice was enacted, I recalled Pat's anxiety:

> "It's really stressful teaching stuff I don't know about. I can't be enthusiastic when I am a page ahead of the students. I become dictatorial I suppose and just transmit stuff and try and get it over with as quickly as possible"

Like previous examples cited within this section, this appeared to be another factor that contributed to the knowledge transmission, teacher centered HE that I observed during data collection. By not aligning modules with teacher expertise and interest, the management relegated the teachers to mere 'deliverers' of the content, rather than teachers who were confident and able to go beyond knowledge transmission.

There also appeared to be teacher confidence issues with having to teach topics beyond their immediate area of interest and expertise. The wider college culture did not appear to adequately support HE teachers in being able to enact pedagogic practices which enabled them to move towards more challenging and autonomous pedagogies associated with HE. Recalling Schatzki, I interpreted the FE 'Jack of all

Trades' model of teaching as having some 'powers of determination' with regard to the way HE teachers enacted their practice.

Aside from some HE timetabling appearing to be governed by staff availability and logistics, rather than expertise, the HE teachers had additional pressures to contend with. The HE courses ran according to the partner university's two semester calendar. In contrast, the college FE ran on a three term calendar. During an interview with Jane the significance of this became clear:

> "This is another thing that just doesn't fit here. It means we end up starting right at the beginning of September for FE. Then HE comes a few weeks later. I know HE ends before FE but it means that through the year we are here to do HE when FE are on half terms and holidays. When do I get to take all my leave? More to the point is when do I get to mark my HE? It's all at different times. So with FE it's a peaks and troughs thing with when the marking comes. Same with HE. But the peaks and troughs seem to coincide so it's no troughs, only peaks"

When I asked if this impacted upon her HE work Jane was quite clear:

> "You bet. It's knackering for one thing. I never get a proper break. It's ok for FE who can down tools and have half terms off to recover and catch up. Not me, not any of us doing the HE. What's worse is that this place shuts down. No library. No canteen. Not so many grooms on the yard or technical staff to help with IT or practicals. It's like the college has forgotten about HE"

I reflected upon Jane's comments and considered how students could study properly without library access. Jane further added:

> "When the place is like this it's like a ghost town. You might think ok, send them off to look things up and prepare in the library then come back to class. But you can't. You're limited about what you can do when everything's locked and there's hardly anyone around. Students can't even buy a cup of tea. I think it's pretty poor to be honest"

Aside from the concerns raised by Jane about the misalignment of semester and term dates, the HE work brought with it an addition layer of bureaucracy from the partner university. As Pat described earlier, the extra work for co-ordinating HE

modules and courses demanded a different set of forms to complete and procedures to follow. Caroline explained how this affected her:

> "When we first started doing it we had no clue about what to do. Their [validating partner university] procedures are so different. Half of the language and the way they defined things was unfathomable! It took me a long time to get my head around it. But I suppose it's just extra work and extra pressure. On top of the FE stuff of student feedback and annual monitoring, there's a whole different set of forms they [validating partner university] want. XXX [HE lead] is quite twitchy about it and is always saying how important it is that it's right. I think she doesn't want to get in trouble with them or look like she doesn't know what she's doing? So she's always on at us to get them done ASAP so she can tick it off. When you're doing 24 hours a week teaching and trying to keep up with everything here it's hard to do this on top. It's just more stress"

I recalled Pat's earlier comment about how FE colleagues reacted when HE teachers explained that HE involved more work. With regard to her 'oh really, what makes you so special?' comment, I asked Pat to explain how she felt:

> "It makes me cross on one level because I am sweating away to do all this extra stuff that no-one in the FE team has a clue about. But the FE way is so strong here. At the end of the day this is an FE college. It's what we do. It's had 40 odd years of doing FE and about 5 of HE. It's not bedded in, it's still new. Until the day when it's 50 50 [FE and HE] and everyone does a bit of both, I don't see it changing"

The ubiquity of the FE culture and its shared meanings and understandings presented problems for the HE teachers. The discord between HE and FE and the lack of universally recognised understandings of HE left the HE teachers feeling misunderstood and isolated. Like Pat, Sally explained how she felt regarding the HE FE dissonance:

> "I don't want to be too vocal about it [HE] and the extra work it brings because they [FE teachers] won't understand and nothing will happen. FE is the mainstay of this place. You can't go around being demanding. I have to work here so I just get on with it and accept it"

There was a reluctance to campaign for the recognition of the special requirements of HE. The lack of a sufficiently large critical mass of HE teachers, coupled with the

perceived scale of the problem resulted in the teachers' adopting a position of accepting the FE dominant culture and the shared meanings and understandings, rather than resisting it and asserting themselves. I concluded that the HE pedagogic enactments suffered as a result of the staffing and timetabling model, with HE teachers teaching beyond their expertise, resulting in surface and transmissive pedagogic approaches.

7.2.6 Subject and teacher training/CPD/scholarship and research

Discussions with participants identified a college culture of developing teachers and their subject specialism ostensibly in relation only to the FE provision. As such, there was a shared understanding of what training and CPD was for and what it typically consisted of. In contrast, participants indicated that training and development to specifically address HE was not part of the mainstream understanding of teacher development.

During her initial interview Sally explained about teacher training provision for staff at the college:

> "Anyone without a teaching qual needs to get DTLLS (Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector) within 2 years I think? I did mine a few years ago"

When I asked how this supported her as an HE teacher, Sally was quick to reply:

> "It doesn't. DTLLS is for FE and entry level. There's nothing in it about HE. It's about inclusive teaching. Lots about dealing with behaviour and how to engage vulnerable learners"

I was struck by this and how this aligned with and supported HE. How would HE teachers develop HE pedagogic practices if there were no training to facilitate their development? In common with the broad remit of the college, it appeared that teacher training focused on supporting FE students, many of who were quite

vulnerable and needed life and employment skills. When I asked Sally where she did receive training or guidance for HE she remarked:

> "Well, that's the thing. I don't really. We [HE teacher colleagues] sort of muddle through using our own experience of our degrees and what we had. We do get some training from XXX [HE lead] but it's not much really. There isn't a programme or compulsory things like there is for FE. CPD for FE is all mapped out for the year. Training on this, training on that. HE is a bit 'as and when' really. It's more stuff to do with deadlines for paperwork for XXX [validating partner university] not about actual how to do it, you know, teach in an HE way"

Conversations with other participants revealed how the FE culture shaped the teacher training and development at the college. As Alison commented:

> "Ofsted is *the* [italics for emphasis] thing. If the college doesn't get a good rating then its bad news. I think we all dread it. It is always in the mix when it comes to training. You know, updates and how to be a Grade 1 teacher"

I asked if Ofsted was universally dreaded by all teachers at the college:

> "I reckon so. Management keep us on our toes by popping in. All of the teaching observations use Ofsted criteria too"

When I asked Alison if the Ofsted criteria was used for HE she revealed the extent to which the FE culture pervaded the HE provision:

> "Oh yes. It's universal. I think management think the Ofsted way is the best way for all teaching. It's what the college needs to satisfy at the end of the day. Why not use it for both? [FE and HE observations] That's them. Not me. I think HE should have its own system but I think they [management] want to make sure we all teach the same to make sure that we tick the Ofsted box"

I interpreted this as being quite controlling on behalf of the management. They were imposing a uniform approach to teaching and expected HE to comply with it.

Caroline explained how the teaching observations operated at the college:

> "Everyone gets observed by the central teaching people. They are based at another campus so they don't all know about landbased stuff. I don't think they have all taught HE themselves, they are people who were FE teachers. I

> question if they should be judging us? Shouldn't it be someone from XXX [validating partner university] instead? Someone who actually knows HE properly? Anyway a Grade 1 observation is *the* [emphasis in italics] thing to get so for HE it has to be prepped and taught in that way, all mega structured and planned to the nth degree. If you did go a bit off piste in a discussion or something or deviated from the plan it probably would not be good. Everyone has it drummed into them that lessons need to be 'Ofsted perfect' if you want to get on"

Caroline further explained how Ofsted did influence her HE work:

> "You have to keep the Ofsted thing in your mind all the time. I do. If you don't get a Grade 1 or 2 you're not a good teacher. You'll be pulled to one side and they'll have their eye on you until you get better. Or [laughs] you don't and then its, well, bye bye I suppose. It's pretty stressful. So I think we all do plan teaching, HE too, to make sure we are Ofsted compliant. Most observers are not subject specialists. They are looking for planning, inclusivity, the activities you use and all that. I don't really think it's relevant to HE but it's what goes here so I definitely try and make sure my lessons will tick the boxes if they come and observe me"

These comments were revealing. It appeared that HE teachers were so concerned about being a 'good' Ofsted-graded teacher, that they focused their pedagogic practice towards satisfying that above all else. Language such as 'compliant' and management 'having their eye on you' all fuelled the sense that HE teachers felt, whilst it was not appropriate, that they did have to comply with the shared understanding at the college about the importance of Ofsted to their teaching. Perhaps the fear of 'going off piste' (as Caroline had phrased it), kept teachers orientated towards very structured classes. This did resonate with what I noted during observations. The HE teachers all tended towards quite teacher centered pedagogic approaches, and did not appear to make many forays into more expansive or less scripted sessions.

Aside from teacher training and Ofsted, participants discussed how their subject knowledge was supported to enable them to have the necessary currency for teaching HE. It appeared that there was no official acknowledgment from the college

management or policy that specifically supported HE teachers to remain up to date. As Hermione explained:

> "Here it's like having degree is enough for FE. Probably more than enough in most cases. If you're teaching entry level and Level 1 and 2 stuff, then a Level 3 and decent industry experience is what is the most important thing. Lots of people in our department have professional quals. They haven't got degrees. That's fine for FE. It's about practical skills and knowledge isn't it? But with HE the college should do a lot more. Everyone on HE needs a postgrad. They need to be up to date. But it's not going to happen. They don't want to fund it and then have people leave as soon as they've qualified"

Jane expressed similar sentiments:

> "I honestly don't think they [management] want to go there and start paying out for HE staff to go on Masters courses. Then what? Study days at home? Money for research? Days away at conferences? Hmmm I can see that happening. Seriously, the college want to have a sort of one size fits all way of training teachers and CPD and stuff. Already it's a performance if you do want to go to a conference or half day workshop. It's like we are asking for too much? What do you want to go to a conference for? The FE teachers seem to manage with the training we give them here. It's like that. Like they [management] don't see why going to a conference would benefit the college. One person spending £500 to swan off to a conference is extravagant. That could cover a full day for a whole department here. That's the feeling I get"

Jane's comments were interesting. I inferred that the college had a shared understanding of teacher training and development which did not extend to HE having different needs. Value for training and development appeared to be judged by Ofsted ratings, by cost and by the number of teachers one training event could benefit.

When I asked Jane what she meant by 'a performance' to go to a conference she explained:

> "Because we all teach so much and because there's so few of us, there isn't really any slack in the system. There isn't anyone to step in. You can't cancel and re-arrange. That's a no-no. It ends up being you can only go somewhere if you are free or if you can swap with someone so they'll cover your class. That makes being able to go anywhere during the week really unlikely. In

> reality you can't up update yourself properly. The solid teaching load sees to that"

When I asked how she felt this impacted upon her HE work she explained:

> "It means I have to try and keep up to date in my own time. It's all from reading journals and books. That's stuff I can do at home. I can't do it here with the teaching and students in and out all day. But it means I don't get to speak to anyone. To hear someone giving a talk and being able to talk to them after or talk to other people. You know? To bounce ideas and say what I thought. I think that is really important to be out there talking to people who are researching. Then you can bring it to the class can't you? I know you can from reading an article but it's not quite the same"

Jane's comments highlighted how the shared understandings at the college about teachers and their training did not extend to HE. The college culture appeared to view teacher development (in its broadest sense) as being rather one-dimensional. As a result, HE teachers were not able to easily access training and development to specifically support that aspect of their role.

Finally, Pat described how the college culture supported scholarly activity and research amongst its teachers:

> "I've said it before. The college is about teaching. That's the top and bottom of it. We don't do scholarship. How? When? I am flat out all day from the minute I come in. I'm always in 7.45 a.m and I stay long after home time. Don't get me wrong. I think it would be brilliant to do research. But realistically how? Even if we had time (which we don't) I don't really know how I would do it. Ok, I want to write an article. How would I start? I've got no idea and that's the problem. No-one has. And management don't want to encourage all that really. They want us to do HE. It raises the reputation of the college and brings in money. That's great. But that's as far as they [management] want to go. They don't want us do it properly"

It appeared that HE was viewed as a lucrative income generator by management, but was modelled on FE lines in terms of teaching and managing it. The generalist, FE model of teachers and teaching seemed to be something into which HE was 'shoe horned' by the management. The way in which teaching and learning was conceived, meant teachers appeared to be programmed to teach and to operate in

the FE way. With no remission for HE teaching, no dedicated time for scholarly activity and no HE development programme for teachers, the HE teachers fell back upon the more prescribed and teacher-led pedagogic approaches that they were both trained for and familiar with.

7.2.7 Library, teaching spaces and resources

The final part of this section discusses how the library and the physical space and buildings impacted upon HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments. Participants described how the campus environment made it difficult for them (and their HE students) to develop an HE identity. Similarly, the lack of specific HE resource provision constrained teachers' abilities to deliver their HE classes.

The library was a concern raised by all of the participants. When I visited it I was struck by its small size and the resources it held. There were few undergraduate level texts and many did not have multiple copies for loan. Those that were available were often not the latest the editions. Similarly, the physical journal collection was quite rudimentary. Referring to the research question, I asked Alison how the library supported her work as an HE teacher:

> "They [library staff] are helpful and they do try. But the library isn't really up to much. I mean, look at it? It's tiny and there are only a few tables to sit and work at. Not that you can work because it's so noisy. They [library staff] do try and police it a bit and keep the noise down, but it's hard. I don't bring my HE students here. There's no point. Obviously I have the reading list and the books on it are in here, but I know there aren't enough of them. I end up photocopying important bits from chapters to make sure they can access it'

Sally expressed similar sentiments about the library and its suitability for supporting HE:

> "I find articles from XXX [validating partner university] online library and make it available to the students. To be fair to them they have tried to use it [validating partner university online library] but they have access issues. They have given up. I have too. I did try and get the access sorted but it was a

> nightmare. XXX [validating partner university] and our library just don't have compatible systems. It means I have to provide lots of materials because my [HE] students can't get it. They need the more academic books. The library here is full of BHS [British Horse Society] exam books and quite simple animal care books. Fine for FE but not really for HE"

Interestingly, and linking to earlier comments made by Hermione about college management believing FE and HE students should have equity with regard to accessing support, an interview with the librarian revealed how the college culture appeared to conceive of all students in the same way:

> "We have to be fair to everyone here. I think all students should be treated equally. As a matter of fairness really. Obviously the students on HE here are not exactly the same as FE students. I suppose they probably do have some different needs but it's vocational here, so it's not quite the same as a university degree course really. All students here are vocational. They need resources to support their development to work with animals in some way. I believe our stock generally meets the needs of all of our learners" (College Librarian)

This notion of 'fairness' extended to all students having the same borrowing rights. This was despite HE student being required to write extended essays and reports that needed evidencing for multiple, peer-reviewed literature sources. Interestingly, despite their assertions, HE students did not have the same equal treatment and 'fairness' that their FE counterparts enjoyed. The library was closed at weekends, evenings and during FE college vacation periods. This holiday closure left HE students without access to the library, librarians or books for extended periods. However, this was not judged as being a concern. When I queried this, the Librarian informed me that HE students could access the library (some miles away from the college) at the partner university. However, when I asked if it was open during the college closure times it was only 'assumed' that it was. There appeared to be no semblance of a coherent library strategy between the college and the partner university, to support the HE students. By providing chapters, journal articles and module resources, teachers were able to circumvent the limited library provision at

Shireland College. But by doing so it served only to perpetuate the neediness of some of the HE students that had been reported by participants. The HE students were not required to develop their own strategies to search and engage with literature; this was often done for them. The HE teachers adopted the strategy to mitigate against students complaining about poor access and resources. It also mitigated against students failing or getting low marks; again something that could be a source of complaint and management censure. As acknowledged by Jane:

> "Look, the library is crap. I have a lot to get through in the Fd [Foundation Degree] course and there just isn't enough in there for students to easily get hold of. If I find a lot of it then students don't moan about it and I know it's been given to them. I can keep tabs on what they have had and then they can write assignments with stuff from proper text books"

What I considered to be of particular interest was how the librarian described the shared vocational nature of all of the students. No distinction appeared to be made between FE and HE. Critically, the view held of the vocational HE not being quite the same as a university degree course was somewhat disquieting. The suggestion being that the HE at the college was of less value, so did not require the kinds of resources that a degree at a university would need. Students needed to develop vocational skills to work with animals, that was the primary aim. This view certainly resonated with earlier ideas of the college not having a shared understanding of HE. FE appeared to dominate the college culture even beyond teaching staff.

Aside from the library, the physical site and the buildings were cited as being a concern for the teacher participants. The prevalence of the FE culture appeared to be sustained not only by the way in which teachers interacted with their students, i.e. in a 'mothering', yet direct and instructional manner. The presence of material artefacts symbolised the shared FE understandings amongst staff and students. As Jane explained:

> "This place isn't very inspiring. When I was a student the corridors in the teaching blocks had student and staff research posters, things about seminars and that kind of thing. That made me feel like I was part of a proper *place of learning* [italics for emphasis]. Professor Smith from the institute of whatever coming to do a talk. We have posters up about dog agility and pony club rallies. It's not quite the same is it? [laughs]. It was so different from what I had seen at school. But here it's not like that. It reminds me of school. We have posters about how to ring Childline and behaviour rules in the classrooms. It feels like a school. I am not sure it's the right place for it really [HE]. It's hard to pin it down but I don't feel like it's good. It doesn't make me feel like 'right, now I am doing HE, it's different'. I think it should be that. It should feel different? I think we need separate places. Not being here with loads of loud 16 year olds. I am forever going out and shouting at them to shut up. It makes me feel like a school teacher"

I considered how the uninspiring campus impacted upon HE practice enactments. Jane's identity as an HE teacher appeared to be stifled by the constant presence of FE students. It appeared that part of being able to foster an HE identity originated from the site. The site needed to have the appropriate infrastructure to enable HE in its widest sense. With the shared understandings of FE and attendant artefacts, Jane struggled to 'feel different'. Hermione expressed similar views about the college as a physical and material space within which to teach HE:

> "Everything is a bit of battle here. I think 'ok I will get the [HE] students to do that and we can go through it on Monday'. Then I realise I can't because the library closes at 4pm on a Friday and is shut all weekend. How can I send them off to do stuff? I have tried to be creative and step it up a bit, but it ends up being a hassle. Once I tried to get students to do a video on the yard and edit it to present… you know to get them doing something a bit more challenging? Total cock up. Because there's no decent IT suite here it all ended up with students moaning because they didn't know how to do it. Flapping about. No-one here could help with the IT. Forget it. That didn't happen again. It put me off trying anything a bit different. This place is not geared up for anything that isn't bog standard FE. It's better to play it safe and keep it really basic"

Finally, Pat explained how the prevalence of the FE culture constrained her ability to engage with her HE students:

> "I can't have a 'grown up' conversation with the HE students. When its tutorials it's either in our open plan office with everyone else in there working

> and chatting. Or it's a classroom with FE students shouting next door. I do try and take them to the canteen sometimes. You know? Just to have a coffee and be a bit more on a level with them? But that can only happen if it's not at lunch and if it's open. It closes around 3.00p.m."

During my site walks I had discovered that there was a staggered system for lunch breaks according to course. If teachers went to the canteen with students during a lunch period that was not their allocated time, they risked being asked to leave by the canteen staff. This was another example of how the shared understanding of the college and how it worked appeared to be at odds with HE. The college culture appeared only to be able to acknowledge and operate in accordance with the dictates of FE.

7.2.8 Concluding summary of "*Just like school*"

When considering the culture of the college in its broadest sense, I return to my research question. How, if at all, did the site and the culture of the college impact and affect the way in which the HE teachers enacted their pedagogic practices? A great deal of memoing and reflecting upon the data drew me to interpret that the site and the culture did play a part in shaping their HE pedagogic enactments. The participants had strongly voiced concerns regarding the colleges' FE culture and its ability to accommodate a different, i.e. HE culture. They felt HE was different to FE and needed to be approached and managed otherwise. In contrast, they felt that the management and their FE colleagues did not necessarily practically support this view. The universal language of Shireland College was FE and this was what all staff had fluency of, and familiarity with. The ubiquity of the FE language served to propagate and preserve taken-for-granted norms and values. The site was bound up with historicism; the college had been running FE since it started over forty years previously. In contrast, HE was a fledgling enterprise, which was restricted to only a minority of teachers and students. This lack of a shared understanding of HE and its

perceived exclusivity, served to create a culture of suspicion amongst FE teachers that HE was getting preferential treatment.

The participants revealed how the ubiquity of the FE culture and its shared understandings amongst staff and students resulted in HE pedagogic practices that were not always what they aspired to. Conscious of the risk of management censure should students or employers find fault with their HE teaching, or complain, teachers employed a number of strategies to mitigate against complaint. They tended towards adopting safe pedagogic practices that students would not find too challenging. This was also an approach used when teaching beyond their area of expertise. The participants also admitted to considering Ofsted when planning HE teaching, largely as a result of the shared understanding across the college regarding the importance of Ofsted; institutionally and individually. This often led to them assuming teacher centered and quite didactic pedagogic approaches. When coupled with the perceived pressure to retain students, the HE teachers felt overall that the college culture was 'just like school' and was not considered to be supportive or conducive to them acquiring and developing an HE teacher identity. Rather than being free to teach within their sphere of expertise, and to empower their HE students to challenge and to question, the HE teachers relied on less risk averse, safe teaching approaches that remained in the 'comfort zone' of themselves and their students as a means of retaining students, avoiding complaint and management censure.

7.3 College Management "Big Brother"

This section presents the interpretive analysis of the second of the four categories: "*Big Brother"*.

This category was constructed in order to reflect a number of concepts and concerns regarding the management and managers at Shireland College. As such, it contains participant narratives that describe how the management regime enabled,

constrained and influenced their HE teacher practice enactments. The category is comprised of three sub-categories:

- Surveillance and control
- Information control
- Performativity and auditing.

What became evident was how the participants felt their HE work was overtly scrutinised, leading them to experience significant pressure and fears of getting into trouble. The censorial culture resulted in conformist teachers who defaulted to adopting low-risk, teacher centered HE pedagogic practices.

7.3.1 Surveillance and control

The ways in which surveillance and control was operated took on a number of forms; unannounced classroom checks, checking the virtual learning environment (VLE) to monitor activity and resource availability, teachers being required to inform reception if they wished to leave the college during the working day, teachers being located on campus via walkie-talkie radios, not always including teachers in module teaching allocation decisions and micro-managing. In combination, these tactics served to create a culture where HE teachers felt under intense scrutiny, thereby relying on pedagogic practices which were less likely to bring them to the attention of the management.

As discussed in section 7.2 ("*Just Like School"*), Sally described how the management employed unannounced classroom visits. The spot checks were not billed as checks per se. Rather, the casual 'popping in' was promoted as being friendly and supportive. This was not how the participants viewed it. As Jane explained:

> "It freaks me out to be honest. If I see them [manager] approaching I think 'uh oh'. It's the way they do it. All hello and smiles as they slip in. But then they go and usually don't say anything then or after. You think 'What was that for? What did they think? What will they say about me to someone else?' It makes you paranoid"

Similarly, Caroline expressed concerns about having VLE module sites monitored by management:

> "I know they are looking. They do say. It's usually a 'well done for your anatomy site. When XXX [senior manager] looked they were impressed'. I don't feel it's praise though. There is always, I dunno, an undertone? Something that makes me feel it's ok now, but it might not be next time? It's hard to put my finger on it. I don't really like it, them checking. It makes me feel like I need checking up on? Like I am doing it wrong or that I might mess it up?"

Arguably, these tactics impinged upon the freedom and autonomy of the teachers. Clearly, it caused disquiet and anxiety. The unannounced classroom visits and the subsequent absence of feedback was particularly potent as a means of demonstrating management power over the teachers. By not giving any helpful or developmental feedback, the act of silent observation functioned as a means of provoking doubt and worry in the minds of the HE teachers. Would there be repercussions? Was the class up to expectations? Where they being particularly monitored for a particular purpose? These questions served only to assault their confidence and identity as HE teachers.

Other surveillance tactics served to create a sense of being watched and under scrutiny. As Hermione remarked:

> "They say it's because of health and safety in case there's a fire? I have seen senior management and bosses from the other campuses come and go. Do they tell reception when they are going in and out? I don't think so. It's here. It's this place. They want to know where you are. It feels like we are being watched all the time here"

Caroline explained how else the management could monitor activities and whereabouts on campus at any time:

> "I don't have a radio but if XXX [HE Lead] is looking for me she will radio the yard or the farm to find me. If you're not in a class or in your office there's a feeling of 'where are you?' like you must be up to no good or skiving off or something?"

It appeared that there was quite widespread use of these techniques to locate and monitor the HE teachers. I was struck by Caroline's remark about management's assumption of not being productive or engaged in legitimate activity if teachers were not in class or in their office. The idea of presenteeism and being visible chimed with the shared understandings of the college culture and its rigid working patterns as discussed previously (section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*). As such, the only valid activity was teaching, having student tutorials, dealing with course administration, marking or covering classes for absent teachers. Anything outside of this and anything that took a teacher away from their traditional and legitimate habitats, i.e. classrooms and offices, was treated with suspicion. This suspicion undermined teachers' confidence. I return to Caroline's earlier remark:

> "I don't really like it, them checking. It makes me feel like I need checking up on? Like I am doing it wrong or that I might mess it up?"

Arguably, the surveillance only increased the chances of her 'messing up' by adding additional pressure on her to meet management expectations. The HE teachers already felt vulnerable and misunderstood by virtue of the fact that HE was not widely understood by FE colleagues at the college. As discussed previously ("*Just Like School"*), the teacher participants had voiced concerns that they felt there was a sense that those not involved in it considered HE (and the HE teachers) to be receiving preferential treatment. In contrast, the HE teachers felt the management did not do enough to give them the time and support to develop HE properly.

The monitoring ensured management could locate staff at any time. Presumably some of this was to be able to deploy them to cover classes for absent teachers. This also served to undermine the HE teachers' agency by not allowing them any option. If they were tracked down, they could be called back and deployed elsewhere at the bidding of the management. Their freedom and autonomy to plan their days in order for them to manage their own work was potentially at risk of being thwarted by management.

The culture of micromanagement made the HE teachers feel ill at ease. I reflected upon the participants' comments and contemplated if the surveillance was a deliberate manipulation of the teachers, or whether it was symptomatic of something else. My experience of the UK college education sector ensured I was aware of the pressures faced by FECs regarding competition, funding and inspection systems. I argue that the management employed a micro-managed approach for a number of reasons. Reasonably, managers who micro-managed their staff were likely to be managed in a similar way by their immediate managers, particularly given the very hierarchical management structure of the college. As a result, they were likely to be under pressure to perform and to preserve their own positions. This micro-management was amplified by the greater financial rewards associated with HE:

> "It's HE that's bringing in the money. FE is always being cut. That's why they are pushing HE so hard and are so keen to make sure it's going well" (Sally)

Similarly, it was compounded by the relative inexperience of the management involved in leading HE. New to management and without having management training, the micromanaged approach was not unsurprising. By closely monitoring HE teachers, forensically scrutinising module websites and imposing unrealistic deadlines to have HE reports and statistics produced, the regime demonstrated lack of trust and was tightly controlling. The agency of the HE teachers was also affected by a lack of delegation by management. Rather than HE teachers taking

responsibility for writing assessments and module handbooks, much of this was undertaken by the management. Symptomatic of wanting control to avoid censure by their manager and to evidence their own efficiency, the lack of delegation served only to disempower the HE teachers further. It also served to evidence a lack of trust in them and their abilities. This lack of trust created poorer quality relationships between the HE teachers and the management. The teachers felt alienated and unable to approach management. This was expressed by Hermione:

> "Management see retention and achievement above all else. I don't feel they recognize HE is different. Its all lumped in with FE, its just teaching, its just students. That's it and woe betide you if you question it"

By virtue of there being relatively few of them to absorb the scrutiny, the HE teachers' sense of being in a minority further contributed to their sense of 'otherness' and lack of confidence. Their ability to develop themselves as HE teachers was compromised when their agency was restricted.

Similarly, the controlling regime further undermined teacher agency by not always giving the HE teachers choices of what HE modules they taught. There was often no two-way conversation to discuss this between management and the HE teachers. As stated previously (section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*), logistics and timetabling sometimes dictated who taught what. This served only to diminish the confidence and status of the teacher participants, reducing them to operatives to deploy, not independent, freethinking individuals.

When teacher participants were not given the opportunity to exercise their own agency and to teach what best aligned with their expertise, their HE pedagogic practice enactments where negatively affected:

> "If I know it that's great. It can be quite a buzz when I talk freely and I can give loads of examples from practice about an area. I like being able to say 'in a recent study by Smith and Jones', that sort of thing. I feel like I am walking

> the walk and talking the talk like a proper lecturer. But take me away from that and it's back to the simple, one chunk at a time FE mode. I can't be waving my arms in the air and be all enthusiastic can I? I have to have my script. I have to keep it very simple. It's not fun and I'm sure it's boring for the students. It's a defence mechanism I guess? Against things I know hardly anything about. I can protect myself if I keep it basic and managed" (Pat)

Pat's comment highlighted how teaching within her sphere of expertise was empowering. In contrast, teaching beyond it with no ability to be able to change the situation, was disempowering. The lack of control of their own teaching areas served to impact negatively upon her identity as an HE teacher. There was appetite to develop an HE identity and to be a 'proper lecturer', but this development was impeded by the surveillance and control regime. By removing choice and pressurising teachers, the pedagogic enactments reverted to a simple, bite-sized model. Pat's remark resonated with the classroom observations that had been conducted during the data collection. I had discerned when the HE teachers were teaching topics within their realm of expertise and experience. In contrast, the 'one chunk at a time FE mode' described by Pat was evident in HE classes which exceeded teacher knowledge and confidence boundaries.

The language of 'defence' and 'protect' was indicative of the perceptible anxiety experienced. Defend and protect against what? It alluded to there being an enemy or to there being consequences for non-compliance. Pat further explained:

> "If you get it wrong you get in trouble. Students moaning and running off to complain about you. Or the boss having you in. I want to keep my head down and get on with it with minimum hassle" (Pat)

The management were not perceived as being allies and supporters of the participants. Instead, there was a sense of the participants being fearful of them, by virtue of the prospect of reprimand. Whilst the censure came from the management, it was also propagated by the students. The complaint and blame culture (as discussed in section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*), with students being viewed as clients or

customers, ensured that any complaint by them would result in management action against the offenders, i.e. the HE teachers.

It appeared that the management exercised hegemony over the teachers. By surveilling and controlling teachers, or at least making them believe they were being surveilled or could be at any time, it ensured the teachers complied with the taken-for-granted teaching and learning culture of the college, i.e. an FE culture (section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*), where teachers were expected to be present at all times to attend to students, to be told what to teach, when to teach it, all with minimum or no consultation. As Sally remarked previously:

> "I don't want to be too vocal about it [HE] and the extra work it brings…You can't go around being demanding. I have to work here so I just get on with it and accept it"

The resignation that teachers had to 'get on with it' was a powerful indicator of the way the management made the HE teachers feel. By scrutinizing the HE teachers, it made them fearful of asking for HE to be treated differently. As a result, they complied with the system, rather than attempting to subvert it. As Hermione explained:

> "You absolutely have to please management. They want to know what you've covering in sessions and they're on at you about deadlines for assessments and things. I've learned the hard way. I came with the same approach for what I had done at [previous college] and its stung me a few times. Now I know to avoid getting in the shit, just do as I'm told. There's no academic freedom here, but I can't fight it now. I did try and was in the office all the time"

By accepting the management regime and not challenging it, this helped to perpetuate the continuance of the FE dominated teaching and learning mono-culture and keeping a 'happy ship'. This resulted in the HE teaching and learning culture being nascent and weak, with teachers often being forced to rely on pedagogic practices more aligned to didactic knowledge transmission to deliver unfamiliar topics

to needy and complaining students. Such was the fear of coming to the attention of the management, the teacher participants adopted simple, teacher centered pedagogic approaches which would be preferred by the HE students. Observing precedent and convention (section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*) was a safer option than overtly attempting to challenge the management. Feeling under threat, the participants' default response was to stick to the rules to meet the shared understandings of being a 'good' teacher, i.e. being there, being compliant, stepping in to cover if needed and being attentive to students.

7.3.2 Information control

The management regime exerted control over the participants by withholding or restricting information related to HE programmes and delivery. This manifested itself in a number of ways; controlling information at the college by preventing HE teachers full participation in the day to day running of the HE programmes, controlling information about external networking and development opportunities, and restricting access to staff and meetings at the validating partner university.

The micromanaged regime ensured the management staff maintained tight control of HE at the college, and offered the HE teachers limited opportunities to be involved in information sharing or decision making:

> "We don't have proper HE meetings. You know? To discuss the courses and the students and be properly having academic conversations about it. They aren't interested in giving choices or asking for my opinion. It's more 'you need to do that by such and such a date'. I feel it's all one way instructions. It's even more like that when anyone senior is there. They don't teach or know my students but that isn't the point. My contribution as their teacher is not important. The point is 'do as we say and keep students because we need the money' (Caroline)

Hermione expressed her own view:

> "I expect we've got an HE strategy and plans for future courses and things. They don't share that with us. Everything is kept close to their chests. It's like

> it's all secret. Special information [whispered]. Anyway they don't want us to know too much do they? It's obvious isn't it? The more we know the more we might ask questions? They want everyone to be good girls and do as they're told, so they keep us in the dark"

There was little value placed by management regarding the opinions or views of the HE teachers. There was no collegial dialogue between them as academic peers. Instead, there was an asymmetrical power imbalance whereby the management dictated HE strategy and processes, leaving the HE teachers to accept it and comply. This served as another factor that diminished the agency of the HE teachers. HE development and management was 'done to them'; they did not actively participate in it. The strict limiting of information sharing was viewed by the HE teachers as being a deliberate tactic employed by the management to subjugate them. The lack of two-way, democratic management, i.e. that where dialogue, freedom and consensus prevail (Saukkonen et al., 2017), ensured the teachers were not able to fully take ownership of their HE work, thereby restricting their agency.

Other information and opportunities pertinent to their HE role was also withheld. The participants described the existence of an 'outside world' of HE, but felt they were not encouraged to connect with it. Instead, the management tended to inform them of external HE events and meetings after they had taken place:

> "They must get things through about conferences and things that would be good for us to go on. I know they do because XXX [HE Lead] will mention it weeks after she went. Errr? Why didn't I know about that? Why didn't I go? I am the one teaching that module. It would have been so good to meet others doing the same thing. You know? Share ideas and learn new things to bring back. It's like they don't want us to go" (Jane)

This failure to inform relevant staff was another means of hindering the HE teachers' abilities to establish an HE identity and acquire new and higher level knowledge to support their HE teaching. It also served to reinforce the asymmetrical power between the management and the teachers. Rather than enabling and empowering the teachers to network and develop their own HE identity and profile, the

management preferred to withhold information or to disseminate later. This approach dictated what the HE teachers were told and what information they were given. They were not always able to experience events and conferences first hand to enable them to make informed judgments about them and their content. These decisions were made by the management on their behalf, creating a feeling amongst the participants that they felt that the management believed 'that they knew best' when it came to HE.

The restriction of information and opportunities also extended to teacher education (as discussed in section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*) when the HE teachers were denied the opportunity to do an HE teacher training award (PG Cert HE) rather than the compulsory FE DTLLS award), and to teaching and learning and science events/workshops/training hosted by the validating partner university. As associate members of the university, the HE teachers were, in theory, able to access workshops and training on a number of topics. This was not encouraged by the management, despite the fact that participants would arguably be better equipped to do perform their HE teacher role if they had more specialist pedagogic and subject knowledge to facilitate their HE teacher development.

Indeed, the relationship with the university was a particular concern for the HE teachers. As Pat explained:

> "I definitely feel they don't want us to contact XXX [validating partner university] because we'll get the right answer? The answer that might mean me saying 'XXX [validating partner university] say blah, blah, blah so I need some more time to do it'. They don't want that. They want to manage it so they tell us the bits they think we need and no more. It's like keeping us in the dark in case we start asking for more. We've had emails from the head saying 'we know you've contacted XXX [validating partner university] directly. You must not do this. All queries must be directed through the HE Lead'"

When I asked why she felt the college discouraged HE teachers connecting with the university, Pat suggested:

> "I think it's partly because they don't want to be dictated to by XXX [validating partner university], like the little college can't cut it? Which in my view we can't, but that's my view. So XXX [HE Lead] will manage it tightly as if to say 'we don't really need any help thank you very much, we're totally on it'. But we're punching above our weight. It's like a stupid arrogance not to get guidance from them [validating partner university]"

The extent to which the HE teachers were prevented from forming a relationship with the university and relevant colleagues was revealed by Jane:

> "XXX [HE Lead] doesn't let us go to student reviews or exam boards at XXX [validating partner university]. We tell her and she tells them. They don't want you to go, they don't want you to talk to them. I feel like a sham. It's my module and my students. I want to be able to go and defend my marks and my students. I want to feel part of a proper course team. I want to know I am doing to right? I need a yardstick and they are it aren't they?"

Denying teachers' the opportunity to attend workshops or meet university staff increased the power of the management by diminishing the agency of the teachers, who were missing timely or essential development opportunities and information. The HE teachers viewed peers at the university as being exemplars to benchmark themselves against as an HE teacher. They felt they needed to see how their university colleagues operated. By preventing this opportunity, the college management perpetuated the weak HE identity and confidence levels expressed by the participants.

Arguably, this silencing of the teachers was attributed to inexperienced management wishing to bolster and protect their own positions. Sharing too much information could weaken management authority. By withholding information, the management created a culture whereby the HE teachers were necessarily dependent upon them. The teachers had to wait for information and instructions; this served to disempower them – they couldn't be autonomous and manage their own time and work. They were beholden to management to drip feed the information at a time of their choosing. This implied the management did not trust them with the information or

trust them to behave appropriately at university meetings. It also served to lessen risk. Sharing and empowering the teachers could result in them questioning the authority of the management; deficiencies could be revealed. By preventing direct contact with the university the risk of contradiction, embarrassment or awkward questions could be mitigated.

7.3.3 Performativity and auditing

The final sub-category discusses how the culture of performativity and auditing affected the HE teachers and their HE pedagogic practice enactments. Chiefly, this was driven by the lean and efficient ideals of a managerialist culture, and emphasized the importance of retaining students in order that they gained their qualification. This imperative was connected to the funding regime at the college. This was an approach broadly accepted as part of the shared understandings at the college as discussed previously (section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*).

Performance related to the institution and to the performance of teachers. The institutional performance was judged principally by finance. Therefore the college operated along a business model line to be able to secure funding. It was also judged by external measures such as Ofsted and QAA reviews via the validating partner university. Similarly, successful teacher performance was measured by student/course retention and success data, by student feedback and by teaching observation grades (using Ofsted criteria both for FE and HE as described in section 7.2, "*Just Like School"*). As Caroline's earlier comment in "*Just Like School"* confirmed:

> "…a Grade 1 observation is *the* [emphasis in italics] thing to get…Everyone has it drummed into them that lessons need to be 'Ofsted perfect' if you want to get on"

The pressure to 'perform' in class in order to achieve an acceptable teaching observation judgment from the management, was a significant factor that drove the

way in which the teacher participants enacted their pedagogic practices. It also created pressure for them, as they were acutely aware of the necessity to maintain or improve their ratings. This was despite the challenging environment they were working in:

> "It's all about money and numbers. Not about quality. How can I be doing quality HE in a classroom where it's hit and miss if the IT will work? Where I have to go out at least once to shout at noisy students outside? Where students are struggling academically?" (Pat)

HE teachers' performance was not measured by management in accordance with how much funding they had successfully bid for, for being invited to speak at external events, for writing papers or for being an external examiner etc. The underlying tenet of keeping students, keeping them happy and ensuring they completed their studies, was strictly reinforced by management. This was the ultimate measure by which teachers had to benchmark themselves against. As Jane remarked:

> "You live and die by your results. There's pressure to get students through. I have been wholly uncomfortable with some modules but it'll be my fault if they fail. It's always hovering over me. Students are cash cows here and there are consequences if things don't go well"

Jane's comment relates to earlier ones expressed in "*Just Like School"* (section 7.2), whereby the teachers felt there was not necessarily a shared responsibility to achieve the goal of retaining students. Rather, there was a sense that it was the personal responsibility of teachers, with consequences and blame for those who did not achieve high retention and success figures. The HE teachers felt that they were personally accountable for students not completing their studies or for not getting high module marks. This pressurized the HE teachers and affected their confidence. Coupled with this, the workloading regime did not take into account the extra time and effort required to support the HE students through their undergraduate studies. As discussed previously, many of the HE students were lacking confidence and were often immature and needy. As a consequence, they needed additional time and

support through tutorials and one-to-one meetings. This was often done in the HE teachers' own time during breaks and before or after college. This input was not measured nor necessarily considered important by the management. Their metrics were narrow in focus, concentrating only on retention and achievement. How this was arrived at appeared less important than the end result.

The language of performativity pervaded the lexicon of both managers and HE teachers at Shireland. As one HE manager explained during an informal discussion:

> "We are operating in a very competitive market. To ensure viability and sustainable growth the college needs to be efficient in all of its quality and teaching processes. Students are paying and rightly expect excellent provision of learning opportunities. The quality of our higher education is something we are proud of. We want to maintain our market position and we see student achievement as being paramount to help us achieve our goals. We strive for our students [HE] to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for them to access graduate jobs in the landbased sector and to thrive in a dynamic graduate job market. We can only do this by having effective and well-organised learning provision that takes into account the needs of students and employers. We monitor and measure performance to ensure we provide the best learning provision possible" (HE manager)

The use of words such as 'market', 'efficient', 'process', 'competitive', 'monitor' and 'measure' were indicative of the managerialist culture. The language and terminology did not include words like 'academic', 'research', 'scholarship', 'innovation', 'creativity', 'critical thinking' etc.; arguably the language more aligned with HE. Instead the emphasis was on retention and achievement to ensure financial viability. By conceiving teaching as a 'process', it diminished the act of teaching to a mechanistic input and output model designed for maximum efficiency. The manager's choice of language also reiterated the earlier comments regarding the college considering students to be 'customers' or 'clients', whereby there was a transactional approach regarding students expectations concerning the commodity, i.e. the HE qualification, they were paying for. The college management regime and the pressure it placed upon the HE teachers did impact upon the way they enacted

their HE practices. By management seemingly valuing financial performance above everything else, the teachers acknowledged that they were cognizant of the personal imperative to ensure students passed. As Sally revealed:

> "I don't want to dumb things down of course, and I don't really unless I really have to. God that sounds terrible! I don't mean this is happening all the time. But I do feel that it will be better all round to stick to the syllabus and the assessments. That's the name of the game really. I might like to do discussions and all sorts of things but if it isn't going to help me get them through then I am less likely to do it I suppose. I am judged on the module marks at the end of the day so that's what I focus on first. It has to be. I don't want to miss things and then students don't do well and I get it in the neck. It's easier to work through and tick it off then I know it's done"

Sally's admittance of her practices aligning specifically to the assessments were not unsurprising given the climate she was operating in. Whilst arguably devoid of creativity and spontaneity, an instrumental 'teach to the test' approach to pedagogy meant she could align it towards the measurable performance indicators of retention and achievement that were prized by the management. This served to minimise the risk of poor student performance and of management censure. As Sally acknowledged, it focused almost exclusively upon adhering rigidly to the prescribed syllabus and assessments. This resonated with the classroom observations conducted during the data collection. Many times with all of the participants a familiar refrain of "You need to know this to pass the module" was noted. Similarly, the HE students frequently asked the teacher participants if the topic was going to be assessed in a coursework or an examination. By focusing on financial drivers, the pressure exerted upon teachers skewed the HE pedagogical focus away from more holistic and intellectually interesting dialogue towards an approach which was quite standardised and mechanistic, and paying particular attention to student assessment.

Alison described how the pressure of performativity affected her:

> "Because it's so moany here there's more chance of getting crap student feedback. You know the thing now, students are customers and we want to hear your voice blah blah. We're inviting them to criticise us! I'm a like a sitting duck. Please write down how crap your teacher is for this module. That's what it might as well say. So I do think I am conscious of it. Especially when I am doing the harder sciencey stuff. Anything with numbers totally fries their brains. So I have to keep it very, very straightforward and give ridiculous amounts of help really. Otherwise I get slated and get in trouble"

Alison's reference to being a 'sitting duck' illustrated how vulnerable she felt. Both Sally and Alison's remarks indicated how their HE teacher agency was inhibited. They were not able to enact the practices they necessarily wanted to, for fear of students failing and/or complaining via module feedback questionnaires. Both scenarios would result in management censure; something to be avoided. By enacting simple and supported teaching sessions, they were able to keep control of content and make clear the relationship between content and assessments. In turn, this supported pedagogic approach was more favoured by the students; therefore the risk of receiving poor feedback was mitigated.

The culture of performativity served to manage how teachers enacted their pedagogic practices. By exerting constant pressure on the HE teachers to be Grade 1 teachers with high student feedback ratings and module/course pass rates, they were compelled to enact pedagogic practices that were highly structured and supported, and closely aligned to the assessments. In turn, this resulted in transmissive approaches where students were often told what they needed to know, rather than necessarily engaging in debates and discussions to enable them to construct their own knowledge and understanding.

The final element linked with performativity was the audit culture that prevailed at Shireland College. All of the participants reported how the administrative demands

and the necessity to complete FE and HE paperwork added greatly to their already burdensome workload. As Hermione remarked:

> "None of this form filling is actually helping me to be a better teacher either FE or HE. It just stresses me out and wastes my time"

The bureaucracy involved in having to comply with two different audit and quality systems diverted the time-poor teacher participants away from preparing and researching their HE teaching as they would have wished. As discussed earlier, teachers felt unable to challenge the management about the extra time HE needed in terms of planning and in terms of fulfilling the demands from the college and the university regarding completing paperwork. Anxious to avoid censure, the teachers complied with the demands of the management and completed the extra work in their own time.

7.3.4 Concluding summary of "*Big Brother*"

The power balance of the managerialist approach was asymmetrical; management dictated, HE teachers complied for fear of censure or sanction. By surveilling staff and controlling information, the regime served to assert its authority and its lack of trust in the HE teachers, thereby assaulting their confidence, agency and autonomy. The audit regime acted as a means of monitoring teacher performance. By not providing HE teachers with the freedom to manage their own time and what they taught, the HE teachers often defaulted to a more instrumental and transmissive pedagogy that would lessen the risk of students complaining or of receiving management censure. Driven by the management demand for high pass rates, the teacher participants acknowledged a pedagogic approach which was often focused on meeting performance indicators and assessment outcomes, rather than on embracing more student centered and holistic approaches. The heightened management scrutiny of HE added to the stress and anxiety voiced by all of the teacher participants regarding teaching HE. The controlling of information and the

restriction of contact with colleagues at the validating partner university diminished their sense of self as authentic HE teachers and prevented them from accessing the HE-orientated pedagogy and subject updating opportunities. The participants felt cut off and disconnected from the wider HE sector, thereby stifling their abilities to develop an HE identity. The management propagated a culture of fear and scrutiny not of openness and freedom, making the teachers fearful of doing HE wrong and getting into trouble. The stakes were higher, the risks were greater with HE. The 'monitor and measure' Ofsted culture, coupled with the fear of needy students failing or giving low teacher satisfaction feedback, were associated in driving the predominantly risk averse, surface, teacher-led HE pedagogy that the teacher participants admitted they often resorted to enacting.

The following section presents the interpretivist analysis of the third of the four categories: "*Busking it*".

7.4 HE in FE teachers "Busking it"

This category was constructed in order to reflect a number of concepts and themes that were connected to the HE teachers themselves, i.e. themselves as teachers, their own education and teaching experience etc. and their relationship with the research question. As such, it represents the complex range of factors which influence and contribute to HE teachers' conceptions of HE and how their practice enactments are enabled and constrained by these factors. In accordance with CGT tenets, I remained focused upon the active process of HE teaching (Charmaz, 2014) and the motivations of the participants associated with their practice. The category is constructed in order to reflect four recurring concepts that surfaced during the data collection, namely:

- Time
- Academic qualifications and subject knowledge

- Teaching experience, teacher training and CPD
- Teacher identity and agency.

In common with the other categories, when interpreting my findings I kept in mind broad concepts of practice. For this particular category I reminded myself of Kemmis (2009a) and his definition of practice as

> "always embodied (and situated) – it is what particular people do, in a particular place and time, and it contributes to the formation of their identities as people of a particular kind, and their agency and sense of agency" (p.23).

This seemed pertinent given the focus of this category concerned the teachers themselves. It also resonated with me because of the name of the category; Busking it. This *in vivo* code was used as I felt it captured the overall sense of teachers who were feeling overworked, disconnected and fearful of being 'found out'.

7.4.1 Time

As described previously in the *"Big Brother"* category (section 7.3), time was a strongly voiced and recurring theme amongst all of the teacher participants. They way in which participants framed 'time' showed variation, the breadth of which I have endeavoured to portray with an indicative sample of interview excerpts. From these, time and its impact upon pedagogic practice enactments were multidimensional, namely with regard to;

- Physical symptoms and teaching approaches
- HE preparation time
- HE classroom teaching approach.

Time was not considered merely in terms of a unit of measurement or a temporal moment. Rather, it was considered as a valued commodity which related to teacher

confidence and teaching approach. Time was in short supply and its relative scarcity had implications upon HE teaching practice was enacted.

> "Sometimes I feel like I need respite or something [laughing]. It's unrelenting; it's exhausting when I have 25 hours of teaching every week plus all the marking and other stuff I have to do. I just don't have the time to prep HE modules as I want to" (Sally)

> "I am under so much pressure I have physiological effects, pounding headaches because of the stress. I just have no time and I do feel that I don't prep my HE properly, I am just scraping by. If you complain about no HE prep time to management its like they don't get it, or they don't want to get it. But the time it takes to prep a 2 hour level 5 lecture on biomechanics and a 2 hour practical FE riding and grooming session is just not comparable" (Jane)

Here concerns regarding the physical aspects of a heavy teaching load were not unsurprising. My own sensitivity to and experience of HE in FE ensured I was very aware of the workload in HE in FE and of the extra time needed to put together HE lessons. This awareness also meant I was not surprised that additional preparation time or teaching load remission was not a feature. Similarly, working in one's own time also resonated with me:

> "With HE it takes way more time. I do do more on these as management really scrutinize HE and I feel under pressure to have everything in place. It's not happened to me but I know there are *consequences* [italics for emphasis] and they would definitely say something, so yeah, it makes me anxious" (Sally)

> "I've been accused by my line manager of over prepping. Really? How do they think I can pull it out of the bag for level 5 for a topic I know little about? It's bizarre. Yep, I can do that for FE, but I just can't in fact won't do it for HE. I am not putting myself in that position of crash and burn in front of the HE students. So I have to use weekends and my time to get it done. But I can't always do it as well as I would like and that's a worry for me but the workload is back breaking and they break people, there's no time. Students expect the VLE bulging with materials and I know management are looking too, so I have to have evidence up there. No time means I can't keep up to date and that massively affects what I do in class. That's so wrong though, they are going to vet nurses and I don't feel I am up to speed enough because there is no time to immerse myself into the research and see what's going on out there" (Pat)

> "Sometimes I think I should say something to my boss, but I don't feel confident. I worry it will be 'this is the job, if you can't do it, you're out'" (Jane)

The rather foreboding language suggesting 'consequences' for the HE work not being 'good' or 'right' chimed with earlier themes that came through in the *"Big Brother"* category (section 7.3), i.e. that the management appeared to pay particular attention to HE, ostensibly because of the additional income it generated. Similarly, the idea that it would be perceived negatively by management if HE teachers raised concerns about work loading, supported earlier analysis regarding staff versus management relations. Taking this idea of 'consequences', I interpreted Pat's comment about not wanting to "crash and burn in front of the HE students" to mean that any sessions where crashing and burning happened would have negative outcomes for her as teacher; no mention was made as to the effect this could have upon the students. A strong sense of needing to protect herself came through. I considered this in the light of earlier discussions in*"Just like school"* concerning a complaint culture (section 7.2.4). From whom did she need to protect herself?

Not only are HE teachers subject to extra scrutiny of HE from management, there is the additional pressure of knowing that students can – and will – complain to management if they are not satisfied with the lessons. Part of the metrics for determining a 'good' lesson (both from management and student perspectives) appeared to be in relation to the amount of handouts and other teaching materials that students could access via the VLE and physically be provided with in class. Therefore, the lack of time to prepare HE took on additional significance. It was not just about feelings of disparity concerning the lack of recognition from management that HE required more time to prepare, teach and mark than FE. Nor was it only regarding feeling underprepared on an individual basis. Time had wider scope; it had ramifications, which encompassed both management and students, creating two conduits by which complaints or criticism might be channeled.

Caroline articulated a further facet of time and its role in teacher practice enactment:

> "If I am not teaching it's students turning up all the time wanting extra help, or having to go and cover someone's class. My time is not my own. I feel they think I am being precious to ask for more time to do HE prep, but I get so many interruptions here. I bank on having a few hours to catch up and then, whoosh, that's gone because XXX [HE lead] comes in and says I have to go, like now, to assess tacking up for level 2. Oh, thanks for that. I suppose I should be grateful because at least I know it. I feel like saying to XXX [HE lead] 'tell you what, I will start that lecture preparation tonight at about 9 o'clock after I have done my FE marking for 9 o'clock tomorrow morning then shall I?' I wouldn't of course! But sometimes it is very tempting "

As discussed previously in *"Just like school"* (section 7.2), participants were expected to be on site from 8.30 am to 4.45 pm, irrespective of whether they were teaching or not. As part of this regime they were subject to having any non-teaching time taken away from them at any time, usually to cover sickness or CPD. Caroline's comment, "My time is not my own" was revealing. It was not merely about inconvenience of having to give up time that could have been spent marking. Rather, it was deeper than that and was indicative of the way in which the college conceived of its teachers. Rather than being autonomous professionals with responsibility to plan their own work and time, they were more akin to being operatives who could be controlled, in order to be deployed in accordance with the wishes of the management, usually to ensure classes were not cancelled. Further, and as described earlier in *"Just like school"*, it also reinforces the Shireland College 'FE' culture where students expect, and are given access to, an open door, 'immediate customer service' culture.

Time; the relative lack of it, and the lack of teacher ownership of it, were implicated in teacher practice in the classroom. So too were recurring comments from participants about sheer exhaustion and its influence on their HE practice. Whilst I had certainly experienced feeling shattered after a full day of HE and FE teaching, what struck me

were impacts that were not only physical ones, but pedagogic practice impacts relating to tiredness:

> "Because I am so wiped out it does make me do it [HE] in an FE style sometimes because I am too tired to try and think about doing something different, lack of time does inhibit my teaching" (Caroline)
>
> "When I am tired – which I am a lot – I revert to a Pony Club 'you will do this girls' way, it's safer in practical's to keep it like that. I know its autocratic and I should ask them [HE students] questions and try and push them but I can't if I have been up til late designing lectures" (Hermione)
>
> "Sometimes I think banging off a PowerPoint isn't great but it's all I can do with no time. It's easier, I can cram it with facts and info and reel it off. To be honest they like it. They prefer a 'tell me the answer' kind of lesson really and if it means they pass that's the name of the game. I mean, you're not going to get in trouble" (Alison)

This apparent link between lack of time resulting in tiredness and a change in teaching approach was significant to practice. It resonated with many of the surface, transmissive, didactic teaching sessions I had observed during my data collection at Shireland College. What I was struck by was how they acknowledged that the autocratic, surface approach was not really appropriate for HE, yet its use had two origins. Firstly it was a pragmatic default position to adopt given the lack of time to think and plan HE. Secondly, teachers felt they could use it without fear of encountering serious censure from students or management.

Following Alison's comment that "So long as I give them the facts and a nice handout they will go away happy", I considered why this might be. Unlike complaints that could stem from not having the VLE updated with lesson materials, here students appeared to prefer the approach. Students appeared to prefer a highly supported and directed pedagogic approach from their HE teachers. I reminded myself that the majority of the HE students were FE progressers, either from Shireland or from another FE LBC. The approach of bite-sized, highly structured lessons would likely be what they were used to. Reflecting upon Alison's statement that "They prefer a

‘tell me the answer’ kind of lesson really and if it means they pass that’s the name of the game”, made me think that this was significant to their practice. Given the pressure to retain students expressed in participant narratives in *“Just like school”* (section 7.2), it occurred to me that this was part of the response to dealing with lack of time. Simple, risk-free HE sessions were more likely to be preferred by students and crucially, were more likely to result in meeting the all important retention and achievement targets.

A further discussion with Hermione appeared to confirm this:

> “If I had all the time in the world I would really try and do things in class to make that break, you know? Break the FE handy holdy stuff and really try and push things. But I can’t, not really. There’s only so many hours in the day. So it’s about choices isn’t it? I have to see how I can realistically get through the week without dying on my feet from exhaustion or getting hauled in. I have come to conclusion that if I can [whispers] ‘be seen’ to be doing everything, you know, lovely worksheets, show a little video, that sort of thing, I will get a well done from XXX [HE lead] and it will keep her off my case for a bit. So I do work harder for my HE to have an all singing and dancing module site. It still takes all my time to do! I can’t do it here, but its time well spent, it buys me a bit of breathing space”

I reflected upon earlier participant narratives (*“Big Brother”*, section 7.3), and the pressure they were under to have ‘proof’ that subjects had been covered via the VLE and in class handouts. But further consideration lead me to surmise that this ‘proof’ to satisfy management did not appear to be based solely upon materials being appropriate for the level of study, i.e. peer reviewed resources, latest research studies etc. Rather, the very fact that something was present appeared to be sufficient to get approval; this was taken as a proxy for ‘good HE’. The fact that, as demonstrated by interviews and my own observations, sessions were largely surface and transmissive did not appear to be an issue. Teachers appeared to mitigate some of the pressure caused by lack of time by ensuring they had replete VLE module sites. Whilst forced to use their evenings and weekends to achieve this, this appeared to be a strategy that could stave off undue attention and criticism from

management, but served only to perpetuate the surface, transmissive HE approach to pedagogy.

In summary, time had a number of effects upon teachers and impacts upon pedagogic practice in the classroom. Time was in short supply. Exhaustion and stress were frequently reported and cited as being a serious concern to all participants. Stress related to being ill prepared and fearing 'crashing and burning' in the classroom. Stress from the constant oversight of management to ensure the financially valuable asset of HE was being adequately attended to was voiced strongly. Time impaired teachers' abilities to prepare HE sessions as they wished, meaning this was routinely done in their own time. Significantly for a study of pedagogic practice, lack of time often resulted in the perpetuation of a transmissive, surface approach to HE teaching. Interestingly, this was in part because of tiredness and lack of available hours (particularly when on campus), but also because of the acceptance, although not condonement, that it was preferred by the students and was not something that the management would necessarily pick up on. Therefore, the HE teacher practice was connected to the management surveillance regime as discussed in *"Big Brother"* (section 7.3).

7.4.2 Academic qualifications and subject knowledge

During the initial interview teachers were asked to outline a brief biography, including their academic qualifications. As part of this teachers were asked if they felt their subject knowledge was sufficient to teach HE. As part of these discussions a number of concerns were revealed, namely those concerning being under-qualified and how this affected both their confidence to teach HE, and the nature of their HE pedagogic practice enactments.

With regard to not being qualified enough, Sally remarked:

> "I do think I should have more than just my degree from XXX College. I think for the good of the courses and the students that we all should have a Masters. I did my degree a while ago now and I have not updated since then really. I would do one but the college has not pushed this at all and I can't afford to pay for it. I feel at the edge of my knowledge quite a lot of time, mainly when I teaching level 5 stuff and really I hadn't even heard of it before I hit Google. I think any minute I will get 'found out'"

Similarly, Caroline said:

> "No way! In my head I don't really think I am qualified enough but here it's like 'you'll do' – but that's an FE way of thinking. College say have a degree, you can teach degree. I'm new to teaching and HE initially filled me with dread. It stresses me out. I can only go by own experience of uni. I do worry about the college being able to properly do level 6 especially. At the moment there is 1 person with a masters. Do they expect her to teach the whole year? I've made it clear to the HE lead that I am absolutely at the top of my threshold, I can't do more then level 4 otherwise it won't be the best it could be"

Both expressed how they felt they were not sufficiently qualified and their perceived lack of qualifications and, by extension, subject knowledge was a source of stress and anxiety. They felt they needed more. That was not to say there was no appetite to undertake postgraduate study amongst the participants:

> "I would love to do a postgrad because higher quals would give me more knowledge and I could feed that into my HE teaching" (Jane)

When I asked how deeper knowledge of her subject would achieve this, Jane remarked:

> "I don't think more quals would just be about me knowing more stuff. I think it would help me to think about it differently. I think really that's what HE and higher study is about. For me, I want my HE students moving on from the 'this is right and this is wrong' stuff and being able to think and reflect. To question I suppose. Not just go along with everything"

This revealed a sense that the difference between HE and FE was not merely attributed to needing more preparation time. Jane's comment appeared more philosophical than instrumental and indicated her desire for her HE students to go

beyond following instructions. She saw HE as being more expansive and challenging. She viewed deeper knowledge of her subject and engaging in postgraduate study as being part of the way in which she might instill questioning and reflection.

In contrast, I also sensed the need for more qualifications was to mitigate against anxiety reported by Caroline, as evidenced by language such as “dread”, “stresses me out” and “being found out”. Rather than affording her HE students opportunities to develop the questioning and reflection that Jane aspired to, Caroline appeared to view higher level qualifications as offering her individual protection against the negative emotions of dread and stress.

Further unpicking of the source of anxiety revealed that a major contributory factor was related to teaching topics beyond their sphere of knowledge and comfort:

> “I am really confident about some subjects and that’s great. That’s what HE should be, people teaching who know stuff, high level stuff. But when it is stuff I am not confident with it definitely dictates my approach. I am like ‘for Christ sakes don’t ask me anything other than the bullet point! I stick to the script and keep it very controlled. I often say ‘don’t worry you don’t need to know that’ if I want to gloss over something I don’t really know about. It’s bad really. It leaves me feeling like a fraud. Even when I prep it to death I still feel its not quite good enough” (Jane)

> “I feel a bit of sham as I think we should be good couple of levels up really. There’s nuts and bolts stuff that you need to know but as you go up the levels you’ve got to have that higher, expert knowledge. I’m level 6 and definitely feel uncomfortable at the thought of being involved with dissertations next year. I am happy at level 4, feel a bit shaky at level 5 when its stuff that’s not right in my comfort zone. For level 6 I know I’d worry about not being quite enough, you know?” (Pat)

I reflected upon these comments and was reminded of Caroline’s earlier remark:

> “…but here it’s like ‘you’ll do’ – but that’s an FE way of thinking”

I was reminded of earlier conversations (*“Just like school”*, section 7.2) concerning ideas of the ‘FE way’ of teachers being expected to teach anything in and around

(and sometimes beyond) a cognate group of subjects/topics. I also recalled how much of the allocation of modules was as a result of teachers being free and having to fit into vacant timetable slots, rather than module allocation necessarily being linked to expertise or teacher preference.

Further discussions with Pat revealed how she felt the generalist model was acceptable for FE but not for HE:

> "I can do it for FE up to level 3 is pretty easy really. It's so general. But I feel I come a bit unstuck here. Nothing bad has happened [pause] *yet* [nervous laughter] but I always worry about when the day will come that I will get found out. That I will be talking so much crap because I have no idea what I'm going on about and a student will just, I dunno stand up and say 'you're talking rubbish'"

As discussed earlier regarding ideas of time, the lack of qualifications presented difficulties in terms of causing stress and affecting confidence. Significantly to a study exploring practice, it too played a part in the way in which pedagogic practice was enacted, and appeared to perpetuate the cycle of tending towards a transmissive and teacher centered pedagogy for HE. A confident approach to teaching appeared to be strongly aligned with having sufficient depth of knowledge, with any perceived knowledge deficit resulting in palpable anxiety and a reliance on teacher centered approaches. During observations I wrote in my field notes in class how it was clear when teachers were in their comfort zone and when they were not. Those who were 'in' tended to be more spontaneous and ask some questions of the students. They appeared to be more relaxed and willing to uncouple themselves from the 'script' afforded to them by using PowerPoint. In contrast, those who were 'out' tended to be less participatory, less challenging and less willing to engage in discussion with students (Appendix 20). This reticence to engage was linked to their lack of knowledge and the urge to "just plough on and get to the end" (Pat). An obvious flaw (aside from the anxiety etc. as described) is that without requisite knowledge,

teachers are less likely to pick up on students with misconceptions, thereby potentially perpetuating and reinforcing incorrect ideas and information.

When reflecting upon this I recalled earlier discussions about the rationale for module allocation. As discussed in*"Just like school"* (section 7.2), this appeared not always to be in accordance with expertise, ability or teacher choice. Rather, operational and logistical drivers appeared to be at play. Ultimately the management dictated who taught what. Similarly, earlier concerns about management not really appreciating differences between FE and HE raised concerns amongst teachers and impacted upon their HE practice. The apparent inability of the management to acknowledge differences (as captured in the aphorism of the FE "Martini Model" as described by Jane), was another force shaping the way in which teachers enacted their HE practices. Finally, the small teaching team described in *"Just like school"* (section 7.2) amplified the issues raised here. The FE model is based upon teaching breadth, not necessarily depth; therefore fewer teachers can cover a broader suite of modules. Clearly an HE model needs breadth but, crucially depth as well. Ultimately the way HE was constituted created a feeling amongst the majority of the teachers that FE was somewhat reluctantly preferred to HE:

> "I am more at ease and confident teaching FE because it's in my comfort zone and it's easier. I can pretty much talk freely about most things on the syllabus up to level 3. I admit it can be boring and the students can be a nightmare. There's definitely less behaviour stuff going on with HE. But it's [FE] easier and needs far less planning. I wish HE could be my first choice all the time. Some of it is. When I know my stuff and I get a nice group and they ask a few things, that's great. But it's down to time again. I just don't have enough. It's also pot luck what you get to teach. If I had more of a say I think it would be better" (Alison)

In summary, qualifications and subject knowledge had a number of effects upon teachers and impacts upon pedagogic practice in the classroom. Levels of academic qualifications were linked with notions of expertise, with expertise (or the lack of) being part of the mix of shaping in the ways in which HE practices were enacted.

There was a clear sense that those teaching what they felt able to teach (by virtue of their subject knowledge acquired through their academic qualifications and subject knowledge), were less anxious and less teacher centered. In contrast, those teaching outside of their sphere of expertise reported worry and concern about being 'found out' by students. They also tended to adopt more transmissive, teacher centered pedagogic practices.

7.4.3 Teaching experience, teacher training and CPD

During the initial interview teachers were asked to outline their general teaching experience, what (if any) teacher training they had received, and what HE CPD they had had since joining Shireland College. A number of powerfully expressed narratives indicated that HE-specific teaching training and CPD were largely absent. Coupled with being relatively novice, inexperienced teachers, there was a sense of teachers feeling unsupported and disconnected from the wider HE community. As with time and academic qualifications as discussed earlier, teachers suggested how these factors affected both their confidence to teach HE, and the nature of their HE pedagogic practice enactments.

During conversations with all of the participants, their relative inexperience generally, and as HE teachers specifically, was a source of concern:

> "I had been here for a year or so I was just trying to survive and keep up head above water with everything. Then one day HE just appeared on my timetable. No one said anything about it, like what it is and how I should do it. Nothing. I don't really know how to do it properly. It's guesswork" (Caroline)

Similar sentiments were expressed by Alison:

> "I am getting more into the swing of things now I have been here for a couple of years, but I am still quite stressy a lot of the time. I still think I could be doing it better. The HE stuff is an extra pressure really. I'd never taught HE before so I haven't got loads of materials or know good techniques to use in class. I don't have a reference point to make it look and feel different from FE? With all of the hours and other stuff, I mainly play things safe and stick to

> PowerPoint to cover what needs to be covered. I guess with more experience I will go a bit more umm, flamboyant? Go a bit more freer? But for now I can't. I don't feel ready for that yet"

As a result of my sensitivity to broad teacher education literature and my own experience, I was not particularly surprised at their comments. Novice teachers are more likely to be anxious and to be focused on 'surviving', especially in the first year or two of teaching. I recalled earlier refrains from participants about HE being different to FE and, of the management failing to philosophically or practically acknowledge their difference. This was a previously reported cause of worry, and this appeared to be compounded by their status as novice teachers. On a practical level their limited resource bank fed the anxiety, as did the lack of knowledge of appropriate teaching techniques. Significantly to this study, their lack of teaching experience generally, and HE specifically, appeared to perpetuate the previously identified teacher centered, PowerPoint-led HE pedagogic practices.

This anxiety appeared to be compounded by their perception that the teacher training offered was not aligned to HE. As discussed in *"Just like school"* (section 7.2), all teaching staff were required to complete the (now defunct) Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS), a teaching qualification specifically aimed at those teaching FE (entry level to Level 3), with no course content relating to HE teaching:

> "I think its bonkers I am doing DTLLS. They took me to develop HE courses. Err why am I doing teacher training stuff for FE then? I don't think it's appropriate. I did complain and said I wanted to do an HE teaching course, maybe at XXX university [validating partner university]. Bang. That door was closed. Got the usual line from my boss about it being important that we all do the same training. Why?" (Hermione)

Pat presented an alternative view to the DTLLS course. Rather than concern about it not preparing her for HE teaching per se, such was her anxiety she felt than *any* teaching course would have been helpful when she joined the college. Like

Hermione, she had asked if a course more aligned to HE teaching might be more appropriate. Like Hermione, her request was refused by management. Being her first college teaching job she expressed, often quite emotionally, how she had been promised support by the management:

> "I should have been put on that DTLLS course as soon as I started and I should have had a reduced teaching load to help get me sorted. Nope. Nothing like that happened. Actually I did say wouldn't it be better to do the PG Cert? No, we all had to do the same course because 'that's what we do here and you will teach FE'. When I arrived they said I couldn't do the DTLLS straight away for fear of *overwhelming me* [emphasis in italics]. That's such a laugh. I was overwhelmed *because* [emphasis in italics] I had no proper teaching experience and if I had of had a vague clue about what to do I might have been less overwhelmed and, you know, stressed out about it all" (Pat)

I reflected upon both Hermione and Pat remarking how the DTLLS course was obligatory, irrespective of the fact that they were teaching mainly HE. I was drawn to earlier comments described in *"Just like school"* (section 7.2), regarding the college CPD culture. There appeared to be an (as reinforced by Hermione and Pat) homogeneous approach, i.e. everyone does the same, irrespective of specialism, teacher role etc. This related to how participants felt the management did not differentiate between FE and HE in terms of what skills and knowledge teachers might need to successfully fulfill the role as an HE teacher. It appeared that the approach was dictatorial and failed to take into account the wishes and needs of the HE teachers. Management simply presented it as a fait accompli; it must be done, even though the teachers were unhappy about it and even though it caused confusion and distress to the HE teachers. I considered this in terms of the college more widely, and used my sensitivity to practice to interpret this seemingly unquestionable management action. Kemmis et al. (2014a) talk of 'sedimented' practices, i.e. those that are firmly entrenched and accepted by people, as being "the way we do things around here" (p.67). It seemed that this historic practice of everyone doing an FE teaching qualification was just that; based upon tradition. I

also considered if it was also based upon management pragmatism. If everyone can be treated the same it is easier (and cheaper) to stick to one teaching course for all. Arguably, it's easier to control teachers if they are all treated the same. Offering choice would necessitate individual dialogue and would require management to acknowledge that HE and FE were not one in the same thing. But what of the implications for those teaching HE and their pedagogic practices?

Sally's comments about how the DTLLS course aligned with her HE work were revealing:

> "The DTLLS is all about FE. So it's really aimed at bite sized chunks and getting things over to students to get them through. You know, keep it simple. Change activities every 15 minutes. Have differentiation and extension activities, that sort of thing. I think a lot of it is to cover Ofsted as well. You know, they love all that stuff"

The universal teacher training regime appeared to be another factor contributing to the previously identified teacher centered, PowerPoint-led HE pedagogic practices. The absence of DTLLS course content regarding HE pedagogy, i.e. seminars, debates, student led/student centered activities, facilitation etc. appeared to reinforce the 'bite size', 'stick to the facts' transmissive approaches I had both seen during observations and heard from the participants. The Ofsted reference was significant. Recalling earlier discussions linked to *"Just like school"* (section 7.2), Ofsted appeared to be ever-present in the peripheral vision of the participants. I was reminded of a comment from Pat:

> "It's not possible to deliver singing and dancing Grade 1 lessons and do all the other stuff as well, but I have to try"

Pat was referring to her HE work. Earlier discussions (*"Just like school"*, section 7.2) about teaching observations reminded me that all sessions, FE and HE, were observed using Ofsted grading criteria. Purportedly a tool for teacher development, observations were largely conducted by staff from a central department with no

particular landbased teaching experience, with their own HE teaching experiences coming from the college sector. When asked about this Caroline said:

> "You have to keep the Ofsted thing in your mind all the time. I do. If you don't get a Grade 1 or 2 you're not a good teacher. You'll be pulled to one side and they'll have their eye on you until you get better. Or [laughs] you don't and then its, well, bye bye I suppose. It's pretty stressful. So I think we all do plan teaching, HE too, to make sure we are Ofsted compliant. Most observers are not subject specialists. They are looking for planning, inclusivity, the activities you use and all that. I don't really think it's relevant to HE but its what goes here so I definitely try and make sure my lessons will tick the boxes if they come and observe me"

As with the DTLLS, Ofsted appeared to be another factor shaping the HE pedagogic practice of teachers. There was no sense that observations were used for HE peer support and HE teacher development. Their use was restricted to being a marker of quality assurance. Like the other factors discussed previously, Ofsted was a stressor for the participants and reinforced earlier comments (*"Just like school"* section 7.2 and *"Big Brother"* section 7.3) about the pressure they felt to be a Grade 1 teacher and to retain students. The undertone that job security was potentially at stake if observation grades were not good was unmistakable. But what of the implications for those teaching HE and their pedagogic practices? The pedagogic approach appeared to propagate the 'keep it simple', low-risk, teacher centered pedagogic approach. I considered how non-specialists could comment upon content, latest subject research/literature, latest HE pedagogy scholarship and academic level, if they were judging more on planning and inclusivity? As Caroline remarked:

> "I don't really think it's relevant to HE but it's what goes here so I definitely try and make sure my lessons will tick the boxes if they come and observe me…[to avoid being]…pulled to one side…they'll have their eye on you"

Whilst it was arguably not relevant to HE, its power to shape HE pedagogic practices was evident. The quest to be a Grade 1 teacher and to remain 'safe' to avoid management intervention was a real concern.

Aside from formal teacher training through the DTLLS course, I asked participants to talk about CPD or other training/development they had to support them as HE teachers. As described at the start of this section, there was a unanimous sense of a lack of management support:

> "We definitely need better support from management. I think its only working now because we don't have many HE students. Something will go bang if they keep getting more and more HE" (Jane)

Caroline echoed Jane's comments:

> "I'm not developed, I was thrown in at the deep end to teach HE. What development have I had to fulfill the role? Nothing. I feel being in the HE team is an opportunity but I don't feel supported or development is being followed through its like 'HE is great' but nothing is done to actually realize HE teaching is not the same as FE teaching"

Participants again reinforced the idea of management being outwardly supportive of HE, but a support that appeared to be little more than lip service. Interestingly, there was a sense from Hermione that part of the reason lay in managements' lack of HE experience:

> "Management love to shout from the roof tops about HE being the best thing sliced bread but really its all talk. We definitely need better support from management. To be honest, I think XXX [HE lead] really works her arse off for HE. It's not like she doesn't care. It's not like the top management where I am sure it's all just about money. XXX [HE lead] is lovely but it's her first management job. She trying to impress and keep it all going. She doesn't know about research and that sort of thing. She doesn't do meetings with us about what HE is, like how it is different and what we can do. How we could do, I don't know, poster presentations or something? Something that isn't spoon feeding FE stuff. So she tries to say 'yay for HE' to make us all feel good but it's not actually very helpful. I need less teaching and more proper guidance" (Hermione)

There was a sense that HE was not being led in a way that gave the HE teachers a strong steer; a strong vision for what HE meant and was at Shireland College. Sally cited a lack of familiarity with HE sector organisations and networks as being part of the problem:

> "You mentioned HEA and HE networks and things and I had never heard of it. I don't know anything about researching and getting funding and things like that. Where would I start? That's the problem. None of us know anything, not even XXX [HE lead] really. I think this is what HE lecturers should know, or at least have some idea and connection with the outside world. That's is really. I think we are cut off here, like a little bubble doing our thing, but not really knowing what else is going on. We get fed all the FE stuff. I can tell you all you want to know about safeguarding. But I can't tell you about latest research in, I don't know, primate conservation"

Caroline remarked:

> "I think them [management] not knowing about HE makes me disconnected from the wider HE community? I have never talked to anyone at the other college campus who teaches HE, I have never clapped eyes on anyone from XXX university" [validating partner university]

There was a palpable sense of operating in a vacuum, of not really being developed by the management to achieve HE-orientated teaching qualifications, or to undertake HE CPD. The HE meetings appeared not to align to HE pedagogy or HE course content. As Pat despondently expressed:

> "There's no academic community here, nothing going on to get one either. There's no-one to bounce ideas off. Here there just isn't anyone like that. I am just a workhorse, a packhorse. There just isn't that culture. Everyone's up against it and there is no journal club or seminars or anything like that for us. The only HE development things are to bang on about retention and success data. I don't care! I want to think about other stuff like getting HE to be better. It's depressing really"

The lack of HE CPD was also a concern for Alison:

> "I admit I am a bit of out of date. I've not done anything since my degree. It's inevitable isn't it? I sometimes see courses about training [animal] and think 'that would be great'. But usually there's no money or time so I don't do anything about it. I don't have time to read journals or anything. Anyway the ones we have in the library are not great. Its more Horse and Hound and Your Cat than anything more scientific"

These comments painted a picture of HE teachers who felt out on a limb. There was great emotion in many of the voices of those who expressed these views. I sensed how they felt rudderless and frustrated by not being led by those with the HE

experience they felt was required to develop HE at the college. Conscious of the research question, I reflected upon the implications of this disconnection for the HE teachers and their pedagogic practices. Aside from expressions of isolation and disappointment, both subject knowledge and pedagogic knowledge currency appeared to be in deficit. If HE meetings extended no further than financial planning considerations and retention data, and if there was no time to update, how might this impact upon pedagogic practices? I concluded that sessions were likely to be limited in their subject breadth and their depth. Similarly, sessions were more likely to be delivered in accordance with the type of teacher training and CPD that these teachers *did* receive; namely an approach which appeared to propagate the 'keep it simple', risk free teacher centered pedagogic approach. Logically, if teachers are not updating and being involved in some way with HE teaching development and support, the likelihood of them adopting a pedagogic approach other than the one they know, trust and have been trained for, seems unlikely.

In summary, teacher experience, teacher training and CPD had a number of effects upon teachers and their HE pedagogic practice in the classroom. With regard to experience, all of the teachers were considered to be novice or inexperienced. The confidence issues associated with this stage of teacher experience were apparent. What appeared to intensify their confidence issues were the perceived mis-alignment of the FE teaching training they were compelled to do and a sense of disconnection from the wider HE community. The absence of HE-specific pedagogy knowledge appeared to lead teachers towards adopting the 'bite size', teacher centered approach to their HE teaching. The 'stick to what you know' approach was less risky default option. This was further compounded by the Ofsted regime. HE observations were judged using Ofsted criteria, and teachers felt great pressure to be a Grade 1 teacher. As a result, they tended to plan and deliver HE with mindfulness to 'ticking the boxes' and to avoid management censure. The lack of connection with other HE

colleagues and with broader notions of research and scholarship all contributed to a sense of deficit. Finally, the absence of HE CPD relating to curriculum content contributed to the sense of teachers feeling being out of date.

7.4.4 Teacher identity and agency

The way the participants perceived themselves as HE teachers revealed an especially complex picture. A number of elements cohered around broad themes of identity and agency. Generally, there was a sense that their identity as an HE teacher was crudely formed and fragile. This appeared to relate to a number of key aspects concerning parity of esteem with university HE teachers, a disconnect between the FE site and HE provision, and a lack of HE leadership and support at the college. The participants also admitted that issues regarding parity of esteem extended to the vocational and practical nature of the HE provision at the college. The teachers felt that others external to the college and the landbased sector viewed studying horses and animals as being 'soft' and not a 'proper' degree subject. Further, the teachers talked of the existence of a hierarchy of institutions offering HE. Perceived as being less prestigious than HE within the university sector, there was a sense that both the qualification and themselves as HE teachers were 'at the bottom of the pile' in terms of status or ranking. Considered together, the result was HE teachers feeling inadequate and desperate for guidance. In contrast to the relative fragility of their HE identity, the teachers expressed allegiance to their identity as professional practitioners (veterinary nurse, riding instructor, animal behaviourist etc.) in more certain terms.

When discussing herself as an HE teacher in relation to colleagues at the partner university, Sally was unequivocal:

> "Ha ha! Like I am the same as your man, Dr Brainbox down at XXX university [validating partner university]. If only! I expect they teach what they are expert in. They are experts, that's the difference I think. Here it's 'teach this, do that'.

> No choice really. We have to cover so much. How can I be expert? I think that probably comes with doing research and having a post grad? I don't feel expert with just a degree"

Her comment revealed a perception of a lack of parity between her as a college HE teacher and her university counterparts. The notion of expertise was significant and linked to the generalist FE teaching model described in *"Just like school"* (section 7.2). It also linked to HE module allocation not necessarily being based upon specialism or teacher preference. Teachers lacked agency to shape and define their HE teaching areas. Similarly it related to earlier concerns about not being sufficiently qualified to teach HE.

Crucially for notions of teacher identity, what was revealed was how their relative inexperience as teachers and their lack of familiarity with HE 'rules of the game' was a source of concern to them:

> "I don't know the rules of the game which I feel has eaten away at my confidence. I won't be given time to learn. Who will teach me anyway? It's so horrible feeling like this – like a fraud just scraping through" (Jane)

Jane's comment implied there were different rules for HE and FE. When asked to expand upon what she meant, Jane explained:

> "I would love to be a proper HE lecturer, you know, someone who goes to conferences, has articles and things like at XXX university [validating partner university]. They know what to do. They are in it and doing it day in day out. Everyone is the same, doing research, talking about academic things, so it's normal. Here HE isn't normal [laughs]. FE is normal and that's what everyone does. I know the FE game so I guess I am an FE teacher first with some HE on the side. I know FE far better because it's all we get. All the CPD and meetings are about FE, its everyday stuff. No-one here is like that [doing research]. We are a bit of a rare breed here. You mentioned QAA and HEA and networks and things and I had never heard of it. Actually that was quite deflating. Like another thing I should know and don't. That's the problem. None of us know anything, not even XXX [HE lead]. Or if she does she doesn't tell us. I feel a bit inferior. I feel bad for the students sometimes, like they are paying lots of money and deserve top people teaching them, not me"

Jane's comments compelled me to reflect upon earlier remarks made by participants about not feeling there was strong HE leadership at the college. I recalled how the homogenous FE training and the general approach to working with students ("*Just like school*", section 7.2), seemed at odds with the more autonomous regime the participants believed staff and students would typically enjoy in a university setting. It also resonated with earlier comments made about no time, space or infrastructure to support a climate for research and scholarly activity.

I sensed a 'worlds within worlds' situation, with the HE teachers being in an FE world, but also trying to function in another, separate HE world. The FE world was the dominant one whilst the HE world appeared to be in its shadow; small, and without a strong sense of purpose and direction. The dominance of the FE world crowded everything out, leaving little or no space for an HE identity to be developed. As a result there was a reluctant acceptance that they were FE teachers first, and aspiring, but not necessarily succeeding, HE teachers second. This linked to earlier comments about preferring to teach FE because it was in their comfort zone and because it was sufficiently general for them to teach a range of subjects with relative ease.

The absence of HE infrastructure and leadership left teachers feeling disorientated and unconfident. I considered Jane's remarks about the HE lead and the comment "Or if she does she doesn't tell us". This reminded me of the management's insistence that HE teachers were not to contact the validating partner university without going through the HE lead. It reinforced the remarks made previously in *"Big Brother"* (section 7.3) about management withholding information and information control.

The weakly defined HE lecturer identity appeared to affect confidence and perceptions of professionalism. There appeared to be a consistent idea of what an

HE teacher should be, one which was characterised as being what a university teacher was like. I sensed they did not know for sure; more instinctively they felt what they were doing was not 'right'. Benchmarking to university teachers was an abstract notion, not one that was related to concrete experience due, in part, to the fact that the teachers had been warned off developing any personal links with the university. This was compounded by those who had an HE in FE degree themselves, therefore they had no direct experience of university at all. This appeared to mythologize university teachers further. The lack of HE direction and HE infrastructure meant teachers had no opportunity to develop themselves as HE teachers; neither in a way more aligned to university HE teachers, nor as HE teachers within an FE setting. They seemed unable to see beyond the university exemplar in terms of how they might be able to develop in a way that encompassed some of the arguably essential dimensions, e.g. scholarly activity, practitioner research, subject expertise. They lacked the time and space to learn the 'rules of the game' and to actually be an HE teacher. Crucially they lacked strong role models and experienced colleagues to help to facilitate their journey to becoming HE teachers:

> "I suppose I do question if I am a proper HE lecturer. I am always asking myself if I am doing it right. I went to a college like this, not uni, and I have never been to XXX [validating partner university] so I have not seen them teaching the undergrads. I am sure I would get a much better idea of how to do it if I did. I am sure they would do activities and have approaches that I don't do. I think it would be valuable to go and peer observe some really top lecturers up there to get some inspiration really. We do peer observation here for the HE team but it seems a bit pointless really. There's only a few of us and we all have done the DTLLS course, so we've been trained in the same way, you know, for FE. It's a bit incestuous. I will say 'yeah that's great' and they same the same. But really, is it? I don't know. What do I know? What do they know? We're equally inexperienced" (Alison)

Her comments also chimed with earlier ones regarding the influence of the FE regime regarding teacher training, and the concern of the DTLLS course not providing meaningful benefit for their HE teaching. By only observing each other and not experienced HE teachers with greater and more HE aligned repertoires of

pedagogic practices, the peer observation appeared only to serve to propagate the DTLLS, bite-sized, approach described earlier, rather than disrupt or challenge it. Alison's comments appeared to imply a lack of confidence in the college and the HE team to do HE 'properly'. The university appeared to be the only legitimate source of HE knowledge and experience. This struck a chord with a remark made by Hermione:

> "I might say to people at [horse] events outside of the college 'oh yes, I am in charge of degrees at XXX' [validating partner university], you know, big it up a bit and I suppose sort of I am so its not a complete lie? But I know its bullshit really. Who am I kidding? We're dabbling. I am faking it. Not good to admit is it?"

Her comment appeared to further evidence the fragility of HE teacher identity. Bolstering her identity with the university connection was a device to outwardly project a higher status identity. Whereas the reality appeared to be contrary to that.

When discussing role models and support, there was a clear sense that having mentors and experienced colleagues alongside them would be beneficial in respect to their own novice/inexperienced teacher status:

> "When I started I didn't get a mentor. I think a wise owl to point me in the right direction would have been so helpful" (Pat)

One of the most unexpected findings regarding mentoring and support concerned the relationships between the HE teachers and their FE teacher colleagues. As described in Chapter 6, one of the in vivo codes: *Us and them*, was profoundly interesting, but was something I could not quite definitively comprehend in terms of its relationship to HE teacher pedagogic enactments. I wrote a number of memos about the nature of the relationships reported by participants. Within the department there were a number of very experienced teachers who would arguably have been appropriately equipped to mentor new teachers. Whilst they may not be HE subject experts they would have animal/equine/vet nurse subject knowledge and experience

of managing classrooms, designing assessments etc., and generally 'getting on' at the college. I looked to Charmaz (2014) and her guidance that researchers "should keep coming back to the quote that won't leave you alone" (p.194) to help me to try and unearth a connection.

In her initial interview Hermione remarked:

> "There is an undercurrent from the BHS [British Horse Society] people [FE], it like resentment. They feel threatened by the graduates. I am seen as an upstart"

Similarly, Pat commented:

> "We all work in an office together, me and those who only teach FE. There is definitely something going on with those FE only teachers who are not graduates. Like its us and them. It's like a chip on their shoulder. They say 'oooh, the clever people with degrees'. I think they feel professionally insecure. They feel marginalized? The college is ramping up HE and saying how important it is, and they can't teach it because they have riding exams, not university qualifications. Maybe they think they will be gotten rid of as everyone now has a degree. I don't want to get involved in politics. It makes a destructive atmosphere. It's stupid really. Some of them have been here for years and get great student feedback and I think 'I would like a bit of that' but I wouldn't ask them to help me. I don't think it is personal about me, but they are definitely quite pissed off that they can't do HE. If they helped me it might be like they are being disloyal to the FE team, so they don't offer and I don't ask"

These excerpts revealed some deep-seated hostility from the FE teachers. The seat of the resentment appeared to be fuelled in part, by the management. Their extolling the virtues of HE whilst excluding non-graduates from teaching HE, appeared only to cause the FE teachers to feel less valued than their HE colleagues. Perhaps because of their seniority (in terms of teaching experience), or because of feelings of their own sense of worth being diminished by their exclusion from HE teaching, their reactions caused the comparatively novice HE teachers great upset. Jane was quite tearful when she described her feelings:

> "I feel like I need a mentor and they [FE teachers] could help, but they don't really talk to me. When they do I always pick up a sense of, I dunno, snideyness. It has definitely affected my confidence, just being in there [mixed FE and HE office]. It's horrible sometimes and I know some of the others feel the same"

It was then that the connection between this Us and them divide and HE pedagogic practice became apparent. The denting of their confidence, their inability to trust or communicate meaningfully with their FE colleagues and the toxic office atmosphere (who were office and departmental) did have a connection with their HE teaching. Although less directly linked (as earlier discussions around academic qualifications and subject knowledge identified, section 7.4.2), I argue that the backdrop of tension and hostility did not enhance HE teacher confidence. It was simply another source of anxiety to add to that being propagated by the management via their intense scrutiny of HE, and by virtue of their fragile HE teacher identity.

Aside from the perceived dearth of individual or management HE experience management, the physical environment also appeared to contribute to the challenge of establishing an HE identity:

> "It's hard to *feel* [italics for emphasis] different like a proper HE person, doing lectures and things when the place is *so* [italics for emphasis] FE. It's hard. The reminders of FE are all around. You know, hearing students shrieking through the wall, and classrooms are in a state and things on the walls are dodgy bits of FE artwork [laughs]. But seriously it's not helpful. I feel I need, I dunno somewhere more, hmm, like a place where we can escape all that. Somewhere quiet, more grown up I suppose. Cleaner, professional. To make it more like an atmosphere for learning. I think it's hard for me to feel different. And it's probably hard for students feel different as well. Especially if they have been here already" (Pat)

I recalled the school-like atmosphere that I had encountered during my site walks and time at the college, where classroom rules requested students not to swear or to tease fellow students. Recalling my sensitivity to PT, the site and the non-human, physical environment did appear to exert some influence upon how teachers considered themselves as HE teachers. By reinforcing the dominant FE identity the

teachers had, I sensed much of the idea of an identity stemmed from familiarity, experience and confidence in something, the lack of which fostered only feelings of illegitimacy and inadequacy. The perceived deficit in their HE identity appeared to be formed not only by lack of subject knowledge, higher level qualifications or teacher training, but also by the environment in which they were operating. The learning spaces did not lend themselves well to teachers being able to establish a strong sense of identity as an HE teacher. The dominance of FE cast long shadows over HE.

Finally, a further facet contributing to HE teacher identity appeared to originate from their arguably more established identity as professional practitioners, i.e. as veterinary nurses, riding instructors and animal behaviourists etc. This appeared to take precedence over their identity as an HE teacher. Their professional identity as nurses and instructors had evolved over a number of years. Perhaps owing to the vocational and practical nature of these occupations, there was a strong sense of the imperative to equip HE students with good employability prospects. Further, they were keen to stress the realities of what HE students would need in order to be successful in the animal/equine/vet nursing sector:

> "The trouble is there is a perception in the [horse] industry that these [Foundation Degree] courses are Mickey Mouse. I think we have to get them having professional BHS [British Horse Society] exams to go with it, so I push them a lot. I try and make the modules fit with it [opportunities to practice and prepare for BHS exams] where I can. I am an instructor and know what it's like out there in the industry. They need to be good riders and confident around the horses. That only comes from getting out there and doing it. They'll get short shrift if they are too slow or too nervy around bolshie horses. They'll get the sack very quickly" (Hermione)

Similarly, as Caroline remarked:

> "It's all very well knowing about the theory, of course it's really important for HE students to know it but at the end of day if they are working as a nurse they have to be able to *actually* [italics for emphasis] restrain a rabbit or

> catheterize a dog. It's a practical job. I do focus my teaching on that and getting the practical skills up to speed. If I can say a bit more, then obviously I will. But they want to be vet nurses. The degree is useful but it isn't the main reason. They need to pass the course to get their professional veterinary nurse status. That's what they are here for. To some extent I am constrained by the VN [veterinary nurse] syllabus which is in the modules. I suppose I look at those bits first. I can't in good conscience send them off into practice if they are not practically competent"

There was a strong sense of students needing to be work-ready. This appeared to be focused upon practical skills and gaining professional status. These comments presented something of a contradiction about how they understood the HE work they were doing; what it was for. On the one hand participants felt their HE identity was weak owing to their lack of subject expertise and research engagement. They felt that HE should be about students developing higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Yet, there appeared to be a strong steer towards practical skills acquisition. I was struck by Caroline's use of language. How did 'competent' relate to higher-order thinking? Her allegiance to veterinary nursing and knowing the job (as opposed to necessarily knowing the evidence-based research associated with the discipline), appeared to determine how she prioritized teaching the HE syllabus. She was not just a college teacher; she was also a veterinary nurse and, as such, had a dual professional identity. Arguably, it determined her HE pedagogic approach. As Caroline remarked, "I do focus my teaching on that and getting the practical skills up to speed. If I can say a bit more, then obviously I will. But they want to be vet nurses". This reminded me of the practical class observations I had seen. They had been virtually indistinguishable between FE and HE. In the HE sessions here had been little dialogue and questioning to push students towards challenging orthodoxy regarding animal handling and management techniques. Particularly for the equine and animal handling classes there was scant attention paid to the practice being evidence-based. It was more 'this is how you do it' and that was it. The emphasis was on being able to 'do' without necessarily knowing why or how the particular

technique or method was developed, or if there might be a better alternative. Rather, the approach had been very teacher-led and instructional with an emphasis on repetition, rather than reflection. The approach focused on the student as a technician rather than a thinker. This was significant to HE practice enactments.

Together with the other contributory factors discussed in this section, the complexity and duality of teacher identity appeared to impact upon practice, with strong occupational identities appearing to contribute towards propagating the teacher-led and surface approaches as described previously. Finally, the occupational and employability orientation did tie in with earlier comments made by participants in "*Just like school*" (section 7.2), regarding the overall college culture of preparing students for the vocational world of work.

In summary, teacher identity and agency did have a number of effects upon teachers and their HE pedagogic practice in the classroom. Chiming with earlier comments, confidence issues were apparent. This was attributed to a complex combination of participants' level of general teaching inexperience, their (reluctant) acceptance that their FE teacher identity was stronger (teaching FE was more within their sphere of comfort and ability), and their weak HE teacher identity. There was not a strong sense that teachers knew what to do and how to be in terms of being an HE teacher. Any conceptions of this were firmly aligned with university teachers. There appeared to be an inability to reconcile themselves as being 'proper' HE teachers within the FE setting of Shireland College. This was further compounded by a perception of a lack of HE management expertise and support and of mentoring generally. This was particularly evident with regard to FE colleagues' negative attitudes, which resulting in further undermining HE teacher confidence. Finally, the duality of their professional identity led to some instances of teachers prioritizing practical elements to equip

students with their conceptions of what was needed to be successful in a particular occupation or sector of the industry.

7.5 HE in FE students "Lacking autonomy"

This section presents the descriptive analysis of the fourth and final category: "*Lacking autonomy"*.

The final category was constructed in order to reflect a number of concepts and concerns regarding teacher beliefs of the perceived abilities and attitudes of HE students at Shireland College, and how HE teacher practice enactments were enabled, constrained and influenced by the nature of the HE students. It contains teacher participant narratives that describe how the HE students enabled, constrained and influenced HE teacher practice enactments. It also includes narratives from HE students who had previously been FE students at Shireland College. The category is comprised of three sub-categories:

- Previous study experiences pre-HE, independence and autonomy
- Student expectations of studying HE
- Teacher expectations of HE students

7.5.1 Previous study experiences pre-HE, independence and autonomy

In common with smaller UK LBCs, many HE landbased students have previously been an FE landbased student in a similarly constituted landbased institution; often internally progressing from the same institution to continue their studies onto HE. This was the case with the majority of HE students at Shireland College. Few students joined HE programmes from an 'A' Level route; those that did tended to have a low to mid-range grade profile. A number of the students who had progressed either from Shireland College or another LBC to HE were characterised as first generation HE students.

At Shireland College, the majority of the HE students were on the FdSc, rather than the BSc route. In practice, both programmes were co-taught and the FdSc students had the option to continue to Level 6 as a 'top up' student; the difference being that the entry qualifications were less stringent for the FdSc programme, with greater flexibility exercised for students who did not have C-grade GCSEs in English, Mathematics and Science. Whilst external candidates were typically expected to have gained a merit in their Level 3 BTEC Advanced Diploma qualification, internal Shireland College FE students were usually allowed entry to the FdSc with a pass grade.

HE Students who had previously been on FE programmes at the college were often lacking in confidence and had experienced academic failure at school. As Jane commented:

> "This is often it for them. Some of them have done three years here on FE. They bombed at school and we've helped to pick them back up. They wouldn't manage in a university with lectures and note taking and things like that. This is the HE they can probably cope with better. You know, smaller, quieter and much more supported. I guess it's not the top-notch degree you get at XXX [Russell Group university], it is more vocational. But these guys want to work for an animal sanctuary or a big equestrian centre so it's what will suit them best all round"

Further, the FE students were more disposed to the practical riding and animal handling aspects of the course, rather than the written components. The Level 3 Animal/Equine BTEC Diplomas at Shireland College were comprised of numerous short written tasks as opposed to essays or extended writing assignments. The students often found writing and more independent research aspects of the course challenging. This view was expressed by Caroline:

> "Give them two hours down on the [animal] unit and they quite like that. They generally enjoy handling the animals. Give them two hours in a classroom with written tasks to do and it's a different ball game. They just can't concentrate for long enough. They find it hard work so they often play up"

As FE students, they were used to the 24/7 open door, mothering culture as described previously. The college embraced notions of students being given significant help and support from teachers and support staff. They were also part of the 'student as customer' culture whereby complaining about teachers and teaching was prevalent ("*Just Like School",* section 7.2).

Those who had studied FE at Shireland College were used to a packaged and prescribed teaching regime, whereby the majority of assessment tasks could be worked on in class time. Students were not widely expected to research material for themselves. Instead, much of the core module content was provided by teachers via handouts and the VLE. As described earlier ("*Busking it*", section 7.4), this was a tactic that teachers often employed as a means of mitigating student complaints or failures. Students could refer their coursework (i.e. not meet pass grade at the first attempt) and re-submit to enable them to pass. Further, formal extended written examinations did not feature in FE programmes.

The assessment-driven pedagogy associated with FE and regular testing was familiar to the students. As discussed previously ("*Busking it*", section 7.4), the HE students appeared to prefer and indeed, demanded, a scripted and more instrumental pedagogic approach that was closely aligned with assessments. As evidenced by the oft cited refrain of 'is this in the test?' expressed by all of the teacher participants, students appeared to prefer a tightly structured approach where the teachers were in control of the content and delivery. As Alison explained:

> "On FE these students can have 7 or 8 assessments per module, so they end up just focusing on the assessments, not about learning really. But for them it's another one ticked off, another step closer to finishing and getting the award. To be honest, I do too. I want them to do well, but I want them to pass…I need them to pass"

Reflecting upon these narratives it appeared that the prior experiences of these typically lower confidence and academic ability students, who had transitioned to HE

via a practically orientated diploma from a LBC, were not sufficiently prepared to be or become independent and autonomous learners. Their FE experiences did not necessarily involve being in classroom where a student centered pedagogy was promoted. Problem solving, students choosing their own resources or study topics and group work gave way to a more individual and prescribed pedagogy that focused on content delivery and assessment.

Deeper reflection considered not only the students and their levels of autonomy, but the teachers as well. This resonated with earlier remarks made by teachers about not always having ownership over what they taught, nor writing their own assessments, or having the agency to make their own decisions about curriculum content (section 7.2.5). If teachers lacked their own autonomy, coupled with not having any HE-orientated teacher training to discuss how to develop HE student autonomy, could they reasonably be expected to facilitate students to develop their own?

Students were not used to taking ownership or control of their learning, nor was there emphasis on students reflecting upon themselves to see what they thought they needed. Rather, students were treated like children and were told what to do; their learning was done to them and for them. The shared understanding amongst teachers to help students and to tell them what to do and how to do it was contrary to the more independent outlook students would arguably need for HE. As Sally explained:

> "FE is all about getting the English and maths up to a standard if we can, getting the practical skills in place and trying to knock out the attitude! Actually, they're mostly quite good kids really. They're a bit all over the place and some have had a tough time. So we need to be firm but fair and get them on track and get them to stay there. There's so much to get though with the BTECs, I have to be really organised and get on with it. There isn't any breathing space in the timetable. You can't take longer and spill over into next week. Otherwise you are behind on the next assessment and everything goes out of the window. I haven't got time to do extra catch up sessions. I do enough teaching already! So I do keep it very 'task, activity, resources,

> assessment' bang. On to the next. Anyway, they won't read anything really, so it's mainly worksheets. It's simpler for everyone and they like it. Then they can ask me questions there and then"

This arguably superficial approach appeared only to perpetuate the control of content and teacher centeredness as previously described within this chapter ("*Busking it*", section 7.4). It also highlighted how the congested curriculum, lack of time and teaching hours impacted upon the way in which teachers delivered the content. It also reinforced the college culture of developing practical and vocational skills. Sally's remarks echoed earlier comments regarding the assumption teachers shared that students would not work outside of the class. Therefore, ensuring assessments were worked on in class was a pragmatic solution and one which would carry favour with the students.

The regulated, controlled and bite sized FE pedagogy, in concert with lower confidence and ability students whereby students received tightly packaged and content blocks, failed to foster a sense of autonomy that would prepare the students for HE. As a result, students were progressing to HE programmes without any significant levels of autonomy or independence as learners. On the contrary, students typically transitioned into HE with two or three years of being at Shireland College and were used to being able to have multiple assessment attempts, no extended writing assessments, arguably unlimited tutor support and a highly scaffolded and prescribed pedagogy, whereby students were required to undertake little work beyond the classroom.

7.5.2 Student expectations of studying at HE

This sub-category explores how HE students considered themselves personally, and their academic abilities as HE students. These students had all previously studied as FE students at the college. As part of this, their narratives described their decision making process for remaining at Shireland College to progress from FE to HE, and

their career aspirations. Students further explained their expectations of HE and how their expectations were met, or not, by the college.

During an informal meeting with a group of first year FdSc students, cost, location and familiarity with the college environment were proposed as being major reasons for staying at the college to continue their studies:

> "Quite a few of my mates stayed on for HE, so it was good to know most people already. It's near home, only a bus away" (HE student 1)
>
> "It's friendly here. I don't think I would like a big uni with loads of people. I can see the teachers here whenever really" (HE student 2)

The familiarity with the milieu and the people was an important factor in choosing to remain at Shireland College for HE study. All considered the smaller, more intimate setting to be more suited to them and their preferred style of learning. What was clear from the students was that most felt that a college environment would suit them better than a university. Many voiced concerns about their ability to be able to cope with university study. As one student explained:

> "I have been here for FD and ND [one year BTEC First Diploma and a two year BTEC National Diploma] and have got my GCSEs now [English and maths Grade C]. I hated school. It was horrible. I am rubbish at writing really, so being here I can do my practical things, you know the stuff I am quite good at and enjoy. If I was at uni it would be loads of lectures and long essays and exams. That's no good for me. I like it here. I know what I am getting. I like having the horses here. They [teachers] go through stuff loads with us to make sure we understand it. I don't reckon it's like that at uni" (HE student 1)

The support was described as being both wanted and needed:

> "I don't think it would work if I had to make notes in lecture and then do coursework like that. I like knowing everyone and I can ask [for help] any time

> really. I need that. I think uni would make me feel like a bit lost or something? (HE student 5)

In terms of cost, there was a sense that whilst it was cheaper than university, students still expected value for money:

> "I didn't want massive debts so here is cheaper which is good. I do want a good qualification though. I want a good job in the animal industry so this is important. I do expect to be given better skills and things so I can go and run a sanctuary or welfare centre" (HE student 2)

> "I see it as an investment I suppose. I am paying now to get a job in the future more than someone with an animal care diploma will get. I don't want to just do hands on practical stuff. I want to run a business or something so I need high skills to get me there. This is costing me £1000s of pounds so I want a good course. I want to know lecturers are there to help me. I feel like it is different now. Before [on FE] I just turned up really, I didn't think about fees or anything. But now I am paying so I feel more like I expect more?" (HE student 3)

Aside from pragmatic and financial rationales for studying HE at the college, there was a sense that the HE was perceived as being easier than university HE:

> "It is a foundation degree so I know it is hard. I get that but here I think it's probably easier than a university degree? It is much more than my diploma definitely! [laughs]. There definitely is more to do now. That was no exams and stuff. So it's not easy now but more easy to get through. You know? It isn't all exams. I know I can get marks for practical things and that's a good thing for me. I can make up marks when my coursework is not very good. I think I have more chance" (HE student 4)

Students had low expectations of themselves and did not see themselves as academic. In contrast, they considered university to be academic in the sense that extended writing and examinations were required. As such, they displayed a sense of 'otherness' compared to peers at a university, whereby university was not a place for students such as themselves. In contrast, their perceived strengths lay in more practical aspects. The college was better able to support students to develop these skills; skills that students' believed would better equip them for the world of work. As a student explained:

> "I think the college is good to prepare me better for a job than university? I mean like getting the BHS exams. That's what's important. From that point of view it does a good job" (HE student 2)

When questioned further about what students' expectations of HE were, and what it was for, they were unanimous that it was skills to get a job. They talked of manager jobs in the animal sector and emphasised how management and practical animal skills were vital. There was a clear expectation that HE would provide 'skills' to prepare them for specific employment roles. Students described how HE would equip them for work and their expectation of being 'given' something, rather than them necessarily developing themselves and finding their own answers. There was a sense of a transactional 'money in exchange for a product' relationship between the college and themselves. In contrast, there was little sense of HE providing more intellectual or academic challenges and development. This resonated with earlier themes in "*Just like school"* (section 7.2) regarding the vocational and employability driven outlook of the college.

Further student narratives about expectations of HE and how they were met, or not, by the college revealed a heightened sense of expectation by virtue of paying tuition fees. As expressed by one student:

> "I think they [HE teachers] should support us and give us as much attention as needed. It's big bucks that I am paying. I agree we have got to step up the level but they doesn't mean leave us to get on with it. Sometimes I think it's a bit lame when they give us things to read on our own and they don't really teach us. Am I paying for higher level teaching? I think I should be getting more sometimes. More proper direction. I had a bit of moan to XXX [HE course tutor] that I think just because we are on the FD doesn't mean we don't still want any help. She says we have to be independent now. Like an excuse to not be there for us?" (HE student 3)

> "I know it can't be a repeat of last year [on the FE course]. They [HE teachers] did say we need to be more independent and that. I suppose it is right, I know it is really but it's harder to manage. I find it loads harder. I like the lessons what are more sort of ordered. I find it easier to get my head around it when it is more 'do this and then that and include that in your report'. Then I know where I am, I panic otherwise" (HE student 2)

These comments are particularly revealing. The first student appears to be suggesting that a more autonomous approach whereby students might be asked to read and research independently is viewed as not necessarily being a legitimate approach to teaching and learning. Whilst the second student appears more accepting of it, the directed, teacher-led more FE-style pedagogic approach is one that students prefer. Further, the notion of paying brings with it a sense of expecting more in terms of tangible contact and support. Arguably, independent reading to broaden knowledge and exposure to relevant literature is fundamental to HE, yet this appears not to be how the students perceive it. Rather, it is viewed as in some way leaving them 'short changed'.

In summary, students preferred to continue their studies at Shireland for reasons of convenience and familiarly. Their lower academic confidence and perception of university being 'harder' and more intimidating were significant factors. What was evident was how their narratives were underpinned by a sense of both heightened entitlement and expectation by virtue of paying for their HE qualifications. The fact of paying instilled beliefs that teachers' should be more attentive to them. Further, this attention should be tangibly evidenced with supported and directed lessons, rather than teaching and learning activities where students were expected to undertake reading etc. without the direct guidance or supervision of the teacher.

7.5.3 Teacher expectations of HE students

This final sub-category explores what expectations teachers had of their HE students, and how this enabled and constrained their pedagogic practice enactments. Expectations are discussed in terms of their attitude and ability. Underpinning both aspects is that of prior knowledge of students. Given that the majority of HE students have internally progressed from FE to HE, teachers are very likely to have already taught them and have knowledge of them; both

individual/personality-wise, and with regard to knowledge of their academic and practical abilities. This prior acquaintance proved to be quite powerful in terms of determining pedagogy. As explained by Sally:

> "To be honest there is a bit of 'Oh God, not you' when we find out who is carrying on after the diploma. There are definitely some who you think 'I didn't like you then and I don't like you now'. You know, the ones who complained and were generally a pain all the way through. You know they will just carry on moaning, 'It's too hard', that sort of thing. It does make my heart sink sometimes. Honestly there are a number who shouldn't be on an HE course. We wet-nursed them through the diploma. You know the ones who do endless referrals until they finally scrape a pass? That should be it. Not everyone can carry on. Sometimes leaving at the end [of FE] to get a job is the best thing for them. Some are quite immature and a bit of time in the real world would help them to grow up a bit. The trouble is we have to take them if they want to stay. They are too valuable. We have to do what we can with them. It is tricky because you just know they won't go off and read and research on their own. They will expect you to nurse them like before and if you don't they will be grizzling to the HE Lead about it, that's for sure. If they don't get loads of guidance – especially for assignments – some wouldn't pass and that is not good news for anyone"

Caroline offered a similar perspective by remarking how many internal progressers impacted upon activities in the classroom:

> "I think they are so entrenched in the way that they get taught for FE, finding the switch to more independent stuff is really hard for them. I would think about getting them to do something more challenging, maybe go off and research something, come back, present and discuss. Trouble is, I can't rely on them to do it. They expect a certain way of being taught. They are really lacking in confidence and it would panic them. Then the time I explain everything I may as well just have taught them. It isn't right, of course they should be doing the more HE stuff, but I have not got the time to experiment really. If it goes wrong they'll be complaining. They like it packaged up and delivered a bit at a time. It means they have more of a chance of getting it. So I think I often give them what they prefer really"

Similarly, Jane explained her view:

> "I know most of them and I teach a lot of science content. I rewind to last year and how they struggled so much with anything with numbers and science. I know if I say 'here's a paper with a loads of numerical data about crude protein requirements for a lactating bitch, read it and analyse', they'll collapse

> in a heap. So I do keep it as basic as I can get away with. They need a structured, step-by-step way of learning, so I do lean quite heavily on the FE approach. I sometimes think I don't have a choice with the kinds of students we get"

Jane further explained how the students' lack of academic and abilities did sometimes lead to her focusing on the assessments and aligning more challenging content delivery to meet assessment requirements:

> "I do have to be selective sometimes about some of the content. I have to be. If I have some weak students then I am not going to blow their minds doing anything other than the absolute core material that I know they will be assessed on. I don't mean practical assessments. Usually all of the students are quite good with the animals and with practical things. That is their forte. I mean with something like anatomical systems or explaining hormones and behaviour. If I know it's hard and I know it is not in the exam I will probably skim over it more to be honest. I have to spend time on the things that I know they are definitely going to be tested on. It's not good practice really, but I have to be pragmatic to an extent. If they don't get good grades or if they fail they will moan and the finger of suspicion will point towards me. They'll be filling in feedback questionnaires about me at the end of the module – I am all too aware of that. If I can coach them through the assessments more I suppose we all get what we want"

The teacher narratives painted a picture of HE students who were lacking confidence in themselves and in their academic abilities. Correspondingly, teachers generally had low expectations of the students, an attitude which frequently came about as a result of having prior knowledge of them at FE level. Conscious of the perceived risk to themselves if students did not pass or perform well, teachers acknowledged how they adopted teacher centered, supportive pedagogic practices to ensure students were able to succeed. This support often manifested itself in the form of quite directed lessons where students were not required to complete significant amounts of independent reading or research outside of class. Perceiving that students either could not or would not undertake such work, teachers covered themselves by ensuring the essential core content was delivered in class. Often assuming that students would struggle, and how this could translate into students complaining if

they did not pass or get good marks, some teachers did admit to reducing the level of challenge accordingly to ensure minimum meeting of syllabus requirements.

7.6 Chapter summary and conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the complexity and challenges teachers faced when teaching HE. Constraints to their HE pedagogic practices included the controlling management regime, the strongly sedimented and widely accepted view of FE and FE teaching practices, the school-like FE on campus culture, the lack of understanding of HE within the college, FE teacher animosity towards HE colleagues, teachers' perceived lack of expert knowledge for subject and for HE pedagogy, teachers' weakly formed HE identity, teachers' relative inexperience of HE teaching, teachers' low academic expectations of HE students and the student complaint culture. In concert, these factors conspired against the teachers and provided a backdrop against which they enacted teacher centered pedagogic practices that were risk averse.

At this stage, my interpretive findings have been outlined through the discussion of my categories. The categories are all data-driven and emanate directly from the field, and were constructed through careful analysis and interpretation of my data. Further, the data have been subject to a process of reduction and abstraction in accordance with GT methodology as advocated by Charmaz (2014). I have explained the rationale behind the way I coded and categorised my data, whilst remaining 'grounded' by using of the participants' voices to render the "analytic story" (Nelson, 2015, p.23) of HE teacher practice enactments. However, it is not at this stage that these findings can be said to be a grounded theory.

In keeping with tenets of CGT, the process of conceptualising and theorising was driven by my own theoretical sensitivity; primarily that of HE in FE, but also by my

knowledge of and theoretical sensitivity to landbased HE in FE, CGT, PT and pedagogy.

During the data collection and analysis period, it was evident both from my observations and from what participants revealed in interviews and informal meetings, that HE pedagogic practice enactments were largely transmissive, didactic, teacher centered and often lacking in criticality and challenge. What also surfaced was the ways in which HE teachers enacted their HE pedagogic practices were subject to a number of influences; omnipresent, all-pervading forces at work which directly shaped and constrained teacher practice enactments. Following interpretitive analysis a range of theoretical themes connections that cohered around, and connected to each of the categories emerged. There were in addition to those to which I had sensitivity; namely themes concerning:

- Surveillance and control
- Teacher identity and agency
- Pedagogic risk aversion.

The following discussion chapter integrates theories concerning these themes. As part of this, the final substantive grounded theory – "a theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area" (Charmaz, 2006, p.189) – concerning HE teacher practice enactment at Shireland College is presented and discussed. These theoretical themes fell beyond my sphere of sensitivity, yet these are the theoretical themes that would resonate both with my participants, and with my own theoretical thinking about how my categories where linked.

When theoretically integrating a GT, Charmaz (2014) suggests how researchers can have a tendency to stick to literature within their own discipline, something she suggests can "limit ways of seeing and perhaps force data into old boxes" (p.153).

Following her guidance, the theories concerning surveillance, teacher identity and risk aversion go beyond the ‘old boxes’ and draw upon a wide theoretical landscape to enable me to present a substantive GT to “analytically theorise[s] how meanings, actions and social structures are constructed” (Charmaz, 2006, p.151).

Chapter 8: Discussion and integration of interpretivist analysis with existing literature

8.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented my interpretivist analysis of the research findings using data grounded from within the research site of Shireland College. To briefly recap, as a means of answering the research question:

When teaching HE at Shireland College, what do these HE in FE teachers do, how do they do it, and why?

the employment of the constant comparison method associated with GT produced four categories, whereby resulting in the emergence of three themes which impacted upon HE teacher practice enactments, namely:

- Surveillance and control
- Teacher identity and agency
- Pedagogic risk aversion.

In keeping with tenets of CGT as espoused by Charmaz (2006), the interpretative analysis in Chapter 7 was constructed using my sensitivity to the research site and to my professional experience of HE in FE in the landbased sector. This sensitivity was further enhanced by my familiarity with some HE in FE literature and pedagogy literature, both of which I have been exposed to in my role as an HE in FE teacher educator (and further enhanced by my preliminary contextualizing and sensitising literature review in Chapter 2). Rather than attempting to disregard any exposure to the literature that I already had, I followed Charmaz (2006) and employed my own reflexivity during the data gathering and interpretative analysis phases. In so doing I allowed my knowledge of this literature to "lie fallow" (p.166) by analytically interpreting what I "actually observe[d] in the field or in my [their] data" (Charmaz,

1990, p.1162), to ensure that the empirical data from the site took precedence over any prior knowledge and assumptions I might have (Charmaz, 1990). As I sought to construct new theoretical ideas from my ideas and interpretations, rather than confirming existing hypotheses and theories from others, it was only upon reaching this stage that I sought to integrate existing literature with my findings. This is entirely consistent with CGT tenets. As discussed in Chapter 1 (section 1.10), to introduce theorists and theories sooner could compromise the emergent and inductive nature of CGT. To develop new theoretical understandings by constructing an explanatory framework to better understand HE pedagogic practices of teachers at Shireland College, the use of empirical data from the site, rather than from existing theory is essential (Willig, 2013). Therefore, rather than hypothesis testing using existing theories, the empirical data from the field of study was given a privileged position over theories and concepts that already existed. Given that GT aims to construct new substantive theories, which are site-specific, this is essential if new insights are to be gained. Without it "the result would be a constructed theory, supporting what was already known, rather than emergent theory providing new insights" (Heath, 2006, p.520). As mentioned at the beginning of the thesis Glaser (1998) advocated only introducing extant theory and literature "when the grounded theory is nearly completed" (p.67). Similarly Charmaz suggests bringing in existing literature only during the final stages to "strengthen[s] your argument – and your credibility" (p.166).

This chapter discusses, situates and integrates the principal findings from the empirical data with literature and theories from within the existing theoretical landscape. As part of this it will describe where these findings support the existing literature, and where it challenges or contradicts it (Willig, 2013). Following Charmaz (2014), I have sought to "locate my argument and analysis in relevant literatures" (p.286). As part of this chapter, the final substantive GT entitled; '*Taking the path of least resistance. A Constructivist Grounded Theory of HE teacher practice*

enactments at a landbased college' is presented as a "theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area" (Charmaz, 2006, p.189).

This GT is a substantive theory, which best accounts for the 'how' and the 'why' of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College. My empirical data and my theoretical interpretations best account for how the HE teachers at this particular site enact their HE pedagogic practices as they do, i.e. in a manner which is defined by themes of surveillance and control, teacher identity and agency and risk-averse pedagogies. It proposes that HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments are constrained by the ingrained and taken-for-granted FE pedagogic culture and practices at Shireland College. Principally, it contends that the culture of constant surveillance, control and complaints restricts and constrains the agency and confidence of the HE teachers and their ability to develop a professional identity as an HE teacher. In turn, this restriction, particularly when coupled with the teachers being early career, novice HE teachers who lack advanced subject knowledge and expertise, results in pedagogic practice enactments which are risk averse and lacking in aspects of criticality and depth associated with HE learning and teaching.

8.0.1 Chapter organisation

In order to fully integrate the CGT as a means of affording it greater theoretical power and reach, the first part of this chapter discusses existing theory, which both resonates with, and is consistent with the three theoretical themes which have come to light as a result of my interpretive analysis. The integration of theories which best accord with each of the three themes will be prefaced with a return to the contextualising and sensitising literature discussed in Chapter 2. Within this discussion I will articulate if, how, and to what extent the contextualising and sensitising literature corresponds with the each theoretical themes of surveillance and control, teacher identity and agency and pedagogic risk aversion. The final part

of the chapter presents the final substantive GT entitled; '*Taking the path of least resistance. A Constructivist Grounded Theory of HE teacher practice enactments at a landbased college'.*

8.0.2 Catalyst for the study, the turn to practice and constructing new substantive theory

At this juncture it worth reminding how the initial catalyst for undertaking this study derived from a 'hunch' regarding the potential influence of an FE site upon the ways in which teachers with both FE and HE teaching remits might enact their HE pedagogic practices. This hunch was subsequently afforded theoretical potential as a consequence of my own 'turn to practice' following my philosophical re-orientation and my own subsequent turn to interpretivism during the pilot study.

After becoming acquainted with Schatzki, and Kemmis and Grootenboer, and my subsequent introduction to CGT, I was provided with a potential means of constructing new theoretical understandings of a poorly understood and under-researched area that was *sensitive* to PT. The decision to draw upon PT and articulate it with CGT afforded me greater awareness and scope to explore teacher practice enactments, and to collect and analyse the data in an emergent, not preordained way.

It is important to recall that PT was not used to prefigure or preconceive my analytic interpretations. This was not designed as a PT study per se, whereby data would be gathered and analysed within a prescribed and preconceived theoretical framework. Rather, PT provided a sense of an *awareness* and acuity towards the site in terms of people, place and things, and to consider it as being more than an inert backdrop. I noted Sørensen's (2009) concern of there being "blindness toward the question of how educational practice is affected by materials" (p.2). Further, it alerted me to what might be salient and to "follow the actors themselves" (Latour, 2005 p.12), in a sense

of looking and listening and theoretically sampling on the basis of leads generated from what teachers said and did within the research site. Following Ortner (1984), I explored the site and all aspects of practice, action, performance and activity to explore "the doer of all that doing" (p.144) within the 'system' (with system conceived not in a ridged structuralist sense, but as a more holistic "relatively seamless whole" (p.148) comprised of symbols, materials and institutions). By examining micro-level practice, and exploring *how* people actually conducted themselves in their social worlds (Pilaro, 2005) through "ground level [work], largely developed in the field" (Ortner, 1984, p.143), this holisitic approach provided a position from which pedagogic practices could be better accounted for. This approach also required not only exploring micro-level practices, but consideration of the wider macro environment within which Shireland College was situated. Ortner reminded of the need for those studying practice to recall that specific cultures/places/societies are not "islands unto themselves, with little sense of the larger systems of relations in which these units are embedded" (p.142). As such, the study of practice requires an examination of "larger regional processes" (ibid.) with an "analysis of its relations with the larger context within which it operates" (p.143).

PT and CGT compelled me to be mindful of language, action and process, and of practice as being embodied. Both PT and CGT further necessitated paying attention to what was tacit and unspoken and to ask questions of things beyond mere questioning and watching. The sensitivity to practice also ensured the data gathering moved beyond the interview as being the primary method used in GT studies. By drawing upon PT, the observations enhanced the richness of the data, and subsequent interpretative analysis, by virtue of the extended time spent within the research site and the engagement with observations and informal 'hanging out' (Bernard, 1994).

Having prefaced this chapter with a reminder of the circumstances surrounding the adoption of aspects of PT within this CGT, the chapter continues with a discussion of the three theoretical themes, drawing upon theory, which is consistent and resonant with each of them.

8.1 Returning to the sensitising literature and integrating existing theory

Exploring the literature following the conclusion of the interpretivist analysis phases led me to a number of theories; primarily those concerning practice, power, identity and risk. Mindful of the need to discuss existing theories that 'best spoke' to, and were consistent with the three themes of surveillance and control, teacher identity and agency and pedagogic risk aversion, I arrived at theories and literature from a variety of theorists and researchers. From each of these I have drawn on particular aspects as a means of discussing and situating my interpretative analysis within a broader theoretical landscape.

Initially, the intention had been to discuss each theme separately and in turn. However, given the synergies between each of the themes and the theories and literature this discussion covers, I return to the theory of Practice Architectures as espoused by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008), before moving on to discuss each theme (for a complete overview of PA see Chapter 4, section 4.7). As I discuss, I suggest that this theory has overarching consistency with all of the themes from my interpretative analysis. It has particular utility for this study, as it is a theory of practice that has been developed by educationalists and applied to numerous educational settings as a means of theorising and studying teachers.

That is not to say that there is perfect and complete alignment between PA and the findings from Shireland College, and that a simple overlaying of the theory sufficiently accounts for each of the themes of surveillance and control, teacher identity and

agency and pedagogic risk aversion. Rather, I frame my discussion around PA as a way of loosely arranging the themes within an education-specific framework of practice theory. Throughout the discussion I will explain where PA is particularly consistent with my findings. In contrast, where PA insufficiently accounts for my findings, I draw upon the work of salient theories as a means of strengthening my discussion and fully integrating the CGT. Each theme will be attended to in turn, emphasising both the theoretic areas of synergy with PA, and theoretic areas that cannot be explained by PA alone. For theoretic areas beyond its scope I will draw on alternative theories to integrate my findings fully, whereby all of the three themes will be theoretically considered and accounted for. At this point I preface all of the three themes by confirming that the neoliberal landscape and the attendant managerialist and performativity culture common to FECs as reported in the literature (Chapter 2) applied to Shireland College. As such, my data is in broad agreement with this existing literature and serves to corroborate it. This existing platform of literature affords me a more focused and enlightened position from which to discuss the three themes. Whilst not wishing to unnecessarily repeat large tracts of the literature from Chapter 2 here, I situate the ensuing discussion and integration of additional, pertinent literature against this backdrop. Within this broad thematic accord there are areas within this discussion, which are not accounted for, or are insufficiently accounted for by the contemporary literature as discussed in Chapter 2. These areas are framed around literature, which falls beyond that which is included in Chapter 2.

8.2 Surveillance and control

8.2.1 Revisiting the Chapter 2 literature review

Prior to discussing how the theory of Practice Architectures accounts for the theme of surveillance and control, it is noteworthy to make reference to the contextualizing and sensitising literature discussed in Chapter 2, in order to ascertain where my findings accord or not, with themes reported in the literature. Of the three themes identified

within this study, surveillance and control do accord most strongly with the existing literature. Within the neoliberal landscape of delivering "'continuous improvement' in teaching and learning" O'Leary (2013, p.710) suggests increased teacher surveillance is widespread in FECs. The widely reported regime of surveillance and accountability in FECs, as well as management scrutity (Gleeson et al., 2015; Robson and Bailey, 2009) chimed with the "higher levels of monitoring and surveillance" as remarked by Simmons (2016, p.695). My findings also confirm those of Nash et al. (2008) and Giroux (2013) both of whom suggest how close monitoring of teachers has created an audit culture of 'distortion', whereby teachers increasingly devoted their efforts to ensuring their paper trails of evidence were in place, in order to provide self-protection. The regime of surveillance and monitoring through Ofsted and 'in-house' college lesson observations reported by Simmons (2016) was also reflected in my findings. So too were reports of teachers experiencing feelings of concern and anxiety due to the surveillance culture; anxiety which resulted in teachers enacting teaching practices to comply with "the perceived preferences of inspectors rather than their own judgements of the needs of learners" (Fletcher, 2015, p.4). Indeed, the teachers in this study felt they had little choice to enact teaching performances of "strategic compliance" (Edgington, 2017, p.84).

8.2.2 Integrating Practice Architectures

Having discussed the extent to which the contextualizing and sensitising literature from Chapter 2 is consistent with surveillance and control, I continue with articulating how, and to what extent, PA is consistent with the themes of surveillance and control.

PA is consistent with the theme of surveillance and control on a number of fronts. As previously described, the theory accounts for practices and the arrangements in a site, which prefigure the particularities of practice enactments. These cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements are constructed by

people and reflect history, culture and politics within a site (Lloyd, 2010). As an educational organisation based upon hierarchy, the arrangements within Shireland College are inevitably designed by people within a site where “unequal social relations of power [which] are invariably invested” (Wilkinson et al., 2013, p.236). As such, they are designed with certain agendas and ideologies in mind, some of which are likely to have been prefigured and shaped by notions of hegemony and power.

For Shireland College these arrangements were deeply engrained and had arguably lost fluidity, creating a widespread taken-for-granted acceptance of practices of surveillance and control. These arrangements had become “sedimented and institutionalised” (Kemmis, 2008, p.25), by virtue of both the length of time practices of surveillance and control had been in place, as well as the scale and extent of the sedimentation. Whilst all of the different arrangements contribute to holding practices in place, it is the theory’s assertion that the relatings of people (within the intersubjective social space through the medium of power and solidarity), which particularly resonates and increases the utility of the theory to account for Shireland College. Indeed, Bartiaux (2013) criticised the original Schatzkian concept of ‘sayings’ and ‘doings’, believing it failed to take into account “issues of power and conflict” (p.1042). Therefore, how participants encounter one another within these intersubjective spaces, and the emphasis upon how differing arrangements shape them, is afforded particular emphasis by PA (Pennanen et al., 2017). Significantly for this theme, PA specifically recognises power as being inextricably linked to practice. As Mahon et al. (2017) contend, practice sites and their attendant practice architectures are subject to “contestation, contradiction, tension and struggles, and raise questions about what avenues for acting (saying, doing, and relating) are opened up, and closed down, by particular power dynamics at play” (p.20).

The *ways* in which teachers, managers and students related to each other at Shireland were prefigured by power and solidarity relations that were sustained by all of the arrangements, and the social-political arrangements in particular. The working relationships between management and teachers, students and teachers, and teachers and teachers were all prefigured by these arrangements. The teacher roles, responsibilities and teaching practices were tightly controlled by management practices via constant checking and monitoring of teachers (in person and via the VLE), and by unannounced observations. This afforded little room for freedoms or working beyond the norms as prescribed by management sayings, doings and relatings. Management sayings, doings, relatings were based upon a hierarchical "high surveillance/low trust system" (Mahoney and Hextall, 2000, p.102), but were couched in more readily acceptable and positive terms through a discourse of 'raising standards', 'quality improvement' and 'staff development', in order to legitimise practice and to justify it (Kemmis et al., 2014b).

The deeply sedimented social-political arrangements ensured that the "aspirations of authorities and the activities of individuals and groups" (Rose and Miller, 1992, p.183) were organised and arranged to prefigure practice enactments according to particular social-political arrangements. For Shireland College this was strongly aligned to rules and policies regarding teaching and learning, and to satisfying Ofsted requirements and standards. To achieve this the management became "the inspector within" (Wilkins and Wood, 2009, p.293), with the social-political arrangements maintaining and sustaining a policed surveillance and "self-surveillance culture… ensuring that key performative targets are met" (ibid., p.293).

In addition to the management, students were part of the surveillance culture by virtue of the arrangements, which enabled complaining about teachers to the management. The existing arrangements enabled students to complain. Presented

as evidencing responsiveness to the student voice, complaining was a legitimised practice which was taken for granted and sedimented. Teachers' failure to satisfy students in terms of the teaching or assessment regime, or accepted ways of speaking and relating could be readily reported to management. In turn, the management could action complaints and concerns via teacher censure and sanction.

Further, fellow teachers were part of the surveillance culture. The 'relatings' between FE colleagues who did not teach HE with those that did, were not mediated through notions of solidarity to each other as colleagues in the same department teaching the same subjects. The material-economic arrangements that existed for HE delivery precluded non-graduate status staff being able to teach on HE programmes. With professional qualifications typically obtained through on the job learning to acquire practical horse and animal management and training skills, many of these FE teachers resented the "polar positioning of the intellectual from the practical" (Stacey et al., 2015, p.2086) and considered the HE teachers were "less skilled and less interested" (ibid.) in the more practical aspects of animal care. As a result, the relatings were not based on unity or mutual understanding, with the potential for practical knowledge and skills shortcomings to be obliquely drawn to the attention of the management.

Finally, surveillance and control can be accounted for at Shireland College via the practice architectures surrounding the timetable and staff time. Within the material-economic arrangements, the timetable was tightly controlled with teachers' time being controlled, even to the extent of what time they could have a lunch break. Edwards and Usher (2003) suggest how "power and the organisation of bodies in space is interactively linked" (p.3). The arrangements to deploy teachers and to dictate the congested timetable were deeply sedimented and made opportunities for

teachers to be able to interact socially or intellectually within semantic space difficult. Bushnell (2003) emphasised the imperative for teachers to have time in shared space for "communion and interaction with others—a collegiality unavailable to many teachers whose work has been structured into discrete 'egg crates'" (p.269). At Shireland College teachers were controlled and isolated by being actively prevented from interacting and forming relationships with peers at the university and beyond within the wider HE community. This deliberate isolation served to minimise the chances of them questioning and challenging the HE regime at the college. As Foucault (1980a) remarked, "people react; ... The mind isn't made of soft wax. It's a reactive substance" (p.325). By restricting access to the wider HE community, management hoped to subdue any challenge and prevent any resistance to the regime.

The regime of surveillance caused teachers to control and self-regulate themselves and to enact their practices accordingly. Through compliance and accepting sayings and relatings with the management, and with doings in accordance with entrenched and taken-for-granted norms of teaching, the teachers

> constructed[ing] themselves in the terms made available to them by the practice architectures they inhabit…teachers are made the educators and teachers they come to be by complying with and also by resisting the particular practice architectures in which they live and work. (Kemmis, 2008, p.21)

Whilst Kemmis suggested practice architectures might be complied with, he also suggested they might be resisted. However, I did not feel Kemmis placed sufficient emphasis upon exploring *why* or *how* teachers might resist or comply. Notions of resistance and resisting led me towards exploring more nuanced theoretical ideas concerning power. As part of this I acknowledged that PA was unable to fully account for aspects of power and resistance, or of wider notions regarding surveillance at

Shireland College. In order to fully account for these phenomena I drew upon selected works of Michel Foucault.

8.3 Foucault and power

A prominent philosopher of the twentieth century, Foucault's conceptions of power and surveillance resonated most strongly with the data from Shireland College. As discussed in Chapter 4, Foucault is considered as being one of the first generation of practice theorists (or early PT scholars). Foucault is considered to have particular significance to PT by virtue of his conception of power and the connections between power, knowledge and practice (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). Operating through local practices with "our bodies, our existence, our everyday lives" (Foucault, 1978, p.70), power is everywhere and it is a constituent part of "discourses, knowledges and 'identity'" (Healy, 2000, p.44).

In contrast with other theorists, his ideas of power assert that, rather than being something that is "held or wielded repressively by one individual over another or others" (Taylor, 2014, p.3), "power emerges in relationships and interactions, power is not possessed, but exercised (Lynch, 2014, p.22). For Foucault, power is "productive and creative (in the sense that it 'makes things happen') rather than merely repressive and prohibitive" (Behrent, 2013, p.83). As part of this, Foucault (2003) asserted that power and its attendant relations are "mobile, reversible and unstable" (p.34). Further, Foucault (1978) insisted that "where there is power there is resistance" (p.95), and viewed power as being "positive, productive and enabling" (Foucault, 2000, p.341), as well as being merely a negative or repressive implement. As well as power being part of relations between individuals in a system, Foucault also emphasised "the intimate connection between power and knowledge" (Schwartz, 2007, p.106).

8.3.1 Foucauldian definitions of power – Sovereign and disciplinary power

Stemming largely from his 1977 publication, *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault described two broad typologies of power; sovereign and disciplinary, both of which appeared during "different historical phases of modernity" (Larsson et al., 2012, pp.9-10) and reflected a shift from punitive to more discursive means (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014).

Sovereign power was that associated with the power of a King. Citing examples from eighteenth-century France, power was visible, authoritarian and absolute. Total obedience was unquestioningly accepted. Those who failed to obey faced public punishments, most often involving death and mutilation. As Lilja and Vinthagen (2014) asserted, sovereign power was "violent, forbidding and punishing" and sought to "limit certain behaviour by forcefully repressing it and/or commanding other behaviour" (p.122).

In contrast, disciplinary power was concerned not with violent and public punishments. Rather, it looked to train, control and correct individuals (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014) in order to create "subjected and practiced bodies" (Foucault, 1977, p.138). Rather than torture and physical beatings, bodies were coerced in order that they became docile (Toros and Mavelli, 2013). By separating people and controlling their time and activities, individuals' bodies and the ways in which they were organised and manipulated in space ensured 'maximum effect' (Oksala, 2011), i.e. bodies that were 'normalized and regimented' (Behrent, 2013) and efficient. Prado (2006) asserted how for Foucault's notion of discipline to be effective, individuals (subjects) were required to internalise 'normal' practices. As such, they became habitualised with the subsequent compliance ensuring subjects behaved "in the very way the discipline dictates" (p.166).

Key to notions of disciplinary power regarded the dependency upon surveillance and upon organising individuals to ensure docility through “minutely detailed rules, constant surveillance and frequent examinations and check ups” (Oksala, 2005, p.99). Through constant surveillance individuals ultimately surveilled themselves, thereby disciplining and training themselves too (Lilja and Vinthagen, 2014). As part of this they became “a tool for other interests” (ibid., p.114), achieved through the values and goals that “reflect[ing] the interests of other and not the individual” (ibid., p.114).

As such, disciplinary power involved aspects of hierarchical observation, normalisation and examination. Through observation of individuals, the gaze to which they are subjected could be used both to correct or to evaluate (Gonzalez Guittar and Carter, 2014). The gaze served to create homogeneity amongst individuals, as they sought to satisfy normalising judgements. Those failing to conform to such judgements could be subject to minor corrective punishments being meted out, including “minor deprivations and petty humiliations” (ibid., p.136). Through hierarchical observation and normalising judgements, individuals “come together in the examination, the third instrument of disciplinary power” (ibid., p.136). Through the examination, individuals are compared with peers, often via “educational measurements… standardized tests [and] … psychological evaluations” (ibid., p.137) in order to assess individuals.

Unlike the very public, often primitive, direct and unambiguous nature of sovereign power, disciplinary power is more diffuse and subtle. As Foucault described, it is

> a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future ... it incites, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely. (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p.220)

8.3.2 Power/knowledge and Regimes of truth

As mentioned previously, the significance of power and knowledge cannot be underestimated. As such, “power and knowledge interact with each other and are dependant upon each other for the creation of a specific environment” (Campos, 2007, p.120). Language and discourse in “specific contexts, periods and experiences create[s] a discourse formation sustaining ‘regimes of truth’” (ibid., p.135), a particular kind of “discourse which it [society] accepts and makes function as true” (Foucault, 1980b, p.131). Thereby, the discourse serves to normalise and to “maintain specific realities” (Campos, 2007, p.133) in a particular place. With reference to Shireland College, this normalisation related to the norms and shared understandings of how to teach and how to *be* as a teacher within that particular site, e.g. a regime of truth which sought to control and maintain a kind of “pedagogical homogenization” (Dawson, 2006, p.71) through “the normative regimes that sustain and (more or less) constantly re-constitute ‘teaching as usual’” (Vick and Martinez, 2016, p.176).

8.3.3 Surveillance and the Panopticon

Returning to previous ideas around surveillance, Foucault argued that controlling people could largely be achieved by simply observing them. He remarked how “being constantly seen, of being always able to be seen, [that] maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault, 1977, p.187). Such discipline could be maintained by utilising instruments to surveille individuals as a means of “enhance[ing] workflow, accountability and safety” (Dawson, 2006, p.81), thereby assuring “conformity and a normalised approach to the work they do” (Wilkins and Woods, 2009, p.288).

Significantly for PT, Foucault's focus is concerned with examining practices within specific contexts, and how power is exercised within local contexts (Healy, 2000). Foucault contends that power is associated with particular discourses, with discourses serving to enable particular things to be deemed as being "sayable whilst marginalizing other[s]" (ibid). Foucault conceives discourse as involving regularity, and as being more than merely the spoken word. Rather discourse "...is not a consciousness that embodies its project in the external form of language; it is not a language plus a subject to speak it. It is a practice that has its own forms of sequence and succession" (Foucault, 1972, p.169). As an instrument of power, discourses serve to normalise certain practices. As such, discourses shape how institutions are assembled and how behaviours are expressed through "types of transmission and dissemination, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them" (Foucault, 1997, p.12). Essentially, discourses dictate what may or may not be said and done, i.e. practised, in particular places. This normalising function was prevalent at Shireland College. The sanctioned discourse of sayings, doings and relatings within the Ofsted approved teaching practices, coupled with the panoptic surveillance culture sought to present a normalised approach to pedagogic practices.

In articulating hierarchical observation, Foucault drew upon architectural ideas of prison designs from Jeremy Bentham, and his so called Panopticon. A circular building with a central tower, the guard within would be able to see each individual cell. However, by employing particular types of lighting, those within the cells would not see the guard, hence ensuring they were never sure if they were actually being watched or not (Watson, 2010). By continuously judging, the guard acted to "alter their behaviour" and would "be able to judge at a glance… how the entire establishment is functioning" (Foucault, 1977, p.204). Foucault described it as being able to "individualize and normalize through a system of continual surveillance,

classification and judgement" (Kitto, 2003, p.2). Through powerful and on-going surveillance Foucault (1980b) maintained how its effects ensured:

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own over seer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over and against himself. (p.156)

The uncertainty of the gaze and where and upon whom it might fall, ensured individuals self-surveilled to avoid being found to have deviated from the norm, thereby lessening the chance of mistakes or offences being committed (Foucault, 1977).

8.3.4 Self-surveillance, self-regulation and resistance

In Foucauldian terms, there are a number of ways in which individuals can self-surveille and self-regulate themselves. Foucault (1977) contended that these practices ensured compliance with, and adherence to the norm and to notions of acceptability and discipline. Rather than face censure or correction for transgressing or deviating from the norm, individuals self-correct and self-regulate their own behaviour by virtue of the ever-present gaze of a Panoptic surveillance regime.

As suggested by Harland (1996), "the exercise of continuing surveillance through the process of monitoring and evaluation means that those concerned also come to anticipate the response … to their actions past, present, and future and therefore come to discipline themselves" (p.101). Sachs (2016) maintains self-surveillance amongst teachers both towards themselves, and towards their colleagues is not uncommon. She contends that self-surveillance is exacerbated when teachers have limited agency. Similarly, Tracy (2000) refers to self-surveillance more in terms of self-subordination, suggesting job demands are implicated in individuals engaging in self-subordinating practices. As such, "the need for teachers to 'look right' and 'fit in'"

(Rutherford et al., 2015, p.332) by not drawing unnecessary attention to themselves is powerful.

Despite the influence and power of the gaze, Foucault claimed that resistance to it exists. Indeed, Besley and Peters (2007) assert “power *entails* resistance – resistance is a relation of power” (p.82), thus resistance is the “irreducible opposite” (Foucault, 1978, p.96) of power and, without resistance, “there would be no power relations at all” (Foucault, 1997, p.292). Whilst Foucault did not explicitly emphasise individual agency within power/resistance arrangements, Bushnell (2003) asserts that teacher agency “cannot be ignored, although it is not without its limitations” (p.264).

When exploring ideas concerning resistance, Lilja and Vinthagen (2014) described it in terms of individuals “openly or covertly refusing to participate in self-disciplinary practices” (p.122), whilst Kelly (2009) used language such as “wilful intransigence” and “*deliberate* recalcitrance” (p.117). However, this did not chime with Shireland College. Indeed, at first glance there appeared not to be resistance, only compliance with the surveillance and control regime.

In terms of reasons why teachers preferred not to overtly resist, habituation, fear of consequences, compliance as a coping mechanism (Chan, 2017) and the perceived scale of the problem can be cited. In terms of the size and scale of the surveillance regime, Crewe (2007) described the surveillance regime as a ‘system’, one that can “be neither ignored nor surmounted” (p.271). As such, the system is perceived by individuals as being too big to tackle and unconquerable, therefore any attempt to do so would be futile.

Wilkins and Wood (2009) contend that as the scale of the surveillance by managers and teachers increases, normalisation and notions of behaving within socially

prescribed and acceptable standards increases. As such, they describe management in terms of being an "'on-site gaoler' who are responsible for directly coercing colleagues into a compliant approach" (ibid., p.293). Further, they contend that the ever-present anxiety caused by Ofsted further adds to the surveillance system, with Ofsted being considered as a "remote gaoler" (ibid., p.293).

As Foucault (1980b) argued, the on-going and sustained repetition of enacting normalised practice within a surveilled regime ultimately results in individuals "interiorising" (p.156) to the extent that they are unable to practise in any other way. As part of this process, individuals become "highly efficient at performing a narrowly defined range of practices" (Taylor, 2009, p.47), with any attempts to resist or deviate being "viewed with suspicion and alarm from within…the consequences of challenging normalisation are potentially disastrous" (Wilkins and Wood, 2009, p.294). As such, the fear of being labelled deviant (Chan, 2016) ensures robust self-regulation and compliance. This is exacerbated with new or inexperienced teachers who are "more comfortable with mandates"—perhaps because they do not have tenure and seniority (and therefore little job protection if they speak out)… only veteran teachers, protected by tenure and social prestige, would translate their dissatisfaction to rebelling against dictates" (Bushnell, 2003, pp.266-267). Thus far this portrays individuals within the system as docile dopes. However, the teachers at Shireland College *knew* the HE practices were not as they wanted them to be, and they *knew* they were being watched. They were all too aware of the cultural norms of teaching which meant a particular type of teaching and behaving was mandated. Therefore, their compliance was in terms of asserting their agency by being strategic and of knowingly manipulating the system (Crewe, 2007) and their bodies by 'playing the game' as a means of coping and surviving (Rutherford et al., 2015). As such, compliance served as being an act of resistance by virtue of the manipulation

involved and of the compliance being something of a ‘performance’. Foucault offers a way of accounting for this through his notion of dressage.

Borrowing from equestrian horse training, Foucault described dressage as being a performance of “non-productive, non-utilitarian and unnatural behaviour for the satisfaction of the controller and as a public display of compliance, obedience to discipline” (Jackson and Carter, 1998, p.54). Those enacting the performance did so “simply for appearance of conformity when their behaviours are closely scrutinised by government representatives or by management” (Berente et al., 2006, p.2). Further, the performance of dressage “requires the visible body to perform according to pre-defined indicators that are specified a priori, by others” (Rutherford et al., 2015, p.333). As such, “performance in teaching is the enactment of prescribed teaching methods and outcomes. Failure to perform best practice is punishable” (ibid., p.335).

At Shireland College the HE teachers knew that their HE pedagogic practices were modelled on FE, because this was what the management expected to see. Similarly, the HE teachers knew there would be consequences for not complying with the pedagogic “pre-defined indicators” (ibid., p.333), therefore they enacted that the management wanted, whilst privately acknowledging the pedagogic practices were not necessarily ‘productive’. The practices enacted also served to satisfy students, thereby creating a win-win for the teachers by virtue of dressage as performance. By enabling them to avoid management censure, student complaints, and to generally survive, dressage provided a protective buffer.

Issues of power, surveillance and control have been discussed in conjunction with theories espoused by Kemmis and Grootenboer and by Foucault. The following section will discuss the theme of Teacher Agency and Identity at Shireland College, and will draw up a range of theories from the existing literature to frame the discussion.

8.4 Teacher identity and agency

8.4.1 Revisiting the Chapter 2 literature review

Prior to discussing how the theory of Practice Architectures accounts for the theme of Teacher Identity and Agency, I briefly refer back to the contextualizing and sensitising literature discussed in Chapter 2, in order to ascertain where my findings accord or not, with themes reported in the literature. Of the three themes identified within this study, there is partial accord with the existing literature. Where there is accord it is with regard to the "substantially reduced levels of autonomy" for teachers post-incorporation reported by Simmons (2016, p.695), the lack of confidence many HE in FE teachers feel with regard to undertaking research (King et al., 2014a), and concerns of being a page ahead of the students due to a lack of specialist subject knowledge (Feather, 2010). Unlike literature reports from Turner et al. (2009b), Jones (2006a) and Feather (2012a), concerns and challenges regarding switching between FE and HE levels were not reported by the teacher participants at Shireland College. Further, the specific FE and HE in FE teacher literature did not comprehensively discuss how HE teachers in an FEC might develop an HE identity, nor the particular challenges faced by novice teachers.

8.4.2 Introduction and definitions of identity and agency

The second of the three themes to be discussed is that of teacher identity and agency. To preface the discussion of PA (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008) and other existing literature consistent with this theme, I begin by outlining a brief definition of teacher identity and agency. As Olsen (2008) remarks, these notions are "hard to articulate, easily misunderstood, and open to interpretation" (p.4), thus justifying the need to be clear regarding my own position before I discuss them in relation to other literature.

I open by proposing that identity and agency are inextricably linked (Buchanan, 2015) and cannot be discussed without reference to one another. In concert with the increasing consensus of educational theorists that teacher identity is not characterised solely by individual perceptions and attributes (Husu, 2007), I align myself with socio-cultural notions of identity. Teachers' identities are socially situated and subject to external factors (Buchanan, 2015), and are constructed as a result of both individual and social influences.

Identity is not fixed; rather it is temporal and relational (Wenger, 1998) and can be subject to cycles of construction and reconstruction in response to a "complex interplay of personal, professional and political dimensions of teachers' lives" (Mockler, 2011, p.518). Further, identity involves a dimension of emotion and is formed "in relationship with others" (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p.733). As part of this I support Husu (2007) and their assertion that the nature of the relationships, situatedness and context can "enable and limit" (p.46) teachers' abilities to form their teacher identity by virtue of the "accepted social norms" (Buchanan, 2015, p.703) and practices within a particular context.

In terms of teacher agency, I frame it within a narrative of being a "socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahern, 2001, p.112), whereby teachers can both actively shape the work that they undertake, and the conditions in which they undertake it (Biesta et al., 2015). This position views people as being subject to, but not necessarily determined by the context and society in which they are a part (Parker, 2016). Rather than "innate capacity" constituting the extent to which an individual might be perceived has being "more or less agentic" (Priestly et al., 2015, p.19), agency is viewed as being an "emergent phenomenon" (Biesta et al., 2015, p.626), whereby

> actors always act by means of their environment rather than simply in their environment [so that] the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations. (Biesta and Tedder, 2007, p.137)

Thus, agency is not something possessed or exerted; agency is *achieved* by people within the temporal, social and material confines of a particular environment (Biesta et al., 2015).

8.4.3 Integrating Practice Architectures and alternative theories

Practice Architectures is consistent with the theme of teacher identity and agency on a number of fronts. To reiterate Kemmis' (2008) earlier contention, teachers'

> self-understandings – their identities and their subjectivities – are [also] framed and constructed by [these] practice architectures. By their engagement with, in, and through these practice architectures, people construct their self-understandings and their understandings of the world, their modes of activity and their skills and capabilities, and their roles and patterns of relating to others. They construct themselves in the terms made available to them by the practice architectures they inhabit. Educators and teachers are made the educators and teachers they come to be by complying with and also by resisting the particular practice architectures in which they live and work. (p.21)

As such, the specific sayings, doings and relatings of teachers are particular to specific sites of practice. They are sustained by the particular cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements within that site via semantic, physical and social intersubjective spaces. As described by Edwards-Groves et al. (2016), these spaces are "not neutral or without some pre-existing form; that is to say, they are interactional spaces where the historical meets the present in activities in physical space–time" (p.323). Within these spaces and arrangements the ways in which teachers speak and think, the ways in which they relate to each other, their ability to achieve agency, and the ways in which non-human, material features can condition and prefigure practice are played out (ibid.). Kemmis (2009b) asserts that

material artefacts particularly give form and substance to the 'doings' element of practice. However, like Schatzki (2002), non-human, material artefacts can prefigure practice, rather than assuming a post-humanist position (see Latour, 1993) whereby "agency is a distributed achievement, emerging from assocaitions between human and non-human entities" (Müller and Schurr, 2016, p.217).

As described previously, the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements can prefigure how teachers enact pedagogic practices by virtue of existing "shared forms of understanding, intentions and attachments (teleoaffective structures) and rules (including social norms)" (Hopwood et al., 2016, p.169). Within these arrangements, what can be said, what can be done and the ensuing relationships are enabled or constrained by them. Following Kemmis, Forsman et al. (2014) maintain that "professional meaning making and identity expression" (p.127) within sayings in social space is enabled or constrained by particular the cultural-discursive arrangements within a site. Zembylas (2005) further suggests that along with identity being constructed and constrained by rules specific to a site, notions of power in determining and producing teacher identities are also significant.

Importantly, it should be reminded that practices are not held in place by one person and their sayings, doings and relatings. Rather, practice is "distributed and held together in discourse, material and social interactions among people who are connected to one another in and by the practice" (Kemmis and Heikkinen, 2012, p.147). Kemmis (2012) describes practitioners in terms of being "*co-habitants* of sites along with other people, other species and other objects, and that they are in interdependent relationships with these others, not only in terms of maintaining their own being and identities, but also *in and through their practices*" (p.3). Thus, he contends how the site and the human and non-human co-habitants are part of

maintaining and sustaining particular identities. This reinforces Blok (2011) and his contention that pedagogic enactments are “situated, produced and taken up under particular sociocultural conditions” (p.64).

Further, practices contain “historical traces of past educational practices that pertain in particular sites (such as the teaching and learning approaches in particular classrooms at a school or at university)” (Edwards-Groves, 2014, p.152). Kemmis (2008) further suggests how practices can lose fluidity. As a result of becoming “sedimented and institutionalised they [then] function as mediating preconditions for subsequent practice ... preconditions that pre-form what kinds of practice will be possible” (p.25). With reference to a classroom setting Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) contend that even an empty room and the way it is arranged and set up will act, to some extent, as a primer for prefiguring the teaching and learning practices which occur, “even before a particular practitioner arrives on the scene” (p.55).

With regard to Shireland College, the strongly historicised and sedimented discourses and practices of FE sustained the FE institutional culture and teacher FE identities, as well as serving to legitimise and privilege dominant FE practices. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) suggest that when working and relating in practice with others, lived relationships can become deeply sedimented to an extent that any sedimentation can “become invisible – taken for granted as ‘the way things are’” (p.38). Through universally accepted norms expressed through sayings, doings and relating, particular FE policy and political discourses served to “inscribe certain practices with particular kinds of meanings… shaping the institutional climate within which they work and live” (Edwards, 2008, p.21).

Kemmis (2006) also remarks that practice architectures are “shaped through histories and traditions that locate practices in such a way that they are ‘inherited’ already formed, by contemporary practitioners, who in their turn, become the

custodians and developers of practices" (p.2.). At Shireland College the professional discourses were orientated towards dominant conceptions of how things were and should be (Wilson and Cervero, 2003). As such, the climate and the sanctioned legitimised practices (Mornig and Lloyd, 2013) sustained the FE identities of the teachers, restricting the extent to which they might achieve agency, and occluded opportunities to develop an HE teacher identity.

At Shireland College the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements resulted in 'sayings' relentlessly focused upon FE discourse and Ofsted, 'doings' concerned with FE teaching training and highly structured, teacher-led pedagogic approaches, and 'relatings' based upon a low-trust, high-surveillance compliance model. As such, the language and specialist discourses found within the site, the resources that made certain doings possible, and the ways in which teachers related with colleagues and students served to sustain the long-established and accepted norms associated with FE and FE pedagogic practices. Discourses regarding scholarship and research were largely absent. Time was tightly controlled, with restricted access to partner university colleagues and the wider HE academic community. Symbols that denoted the FE nature of the site served to act as constant reminders of FE and its primacy. Relatings with FE colleagues and the surveillance culture sustained FE identities by dint of HE teachers not wishing to promote HE for fear of further damaging fragile relationships. FE identities were further preserved by virtue of the lack of sufficient numbers, i.e. a critical mass of HE teachers to attempt to bring about change.

Whilst Kemmis maintains practices can be sustained and become sedimented, he also contends that practices can change within a site. Describing practice architecture arrangements as being in "a dance between reproduction and transformation" (Kemmis et al., 2014b, p.3), Kemmis maintains that to change

practice, changing the practices of individuals is not enough; the sustaining architectures and concomitant understandings and agreements of individuals must change too.

Drawing on Habermas and his Theory of Communicative Action, Kemmis et al. (2014a) contend that communicative spaces (intersubjective sematic, physical and social spaces) enable people the opportunity to "stop to consider what is happening in their situation, and strive for intersubjective agreement about the language and ideas they use, mutual understanding of one another's perspectives, and unforced consensus about what to do" (pp.34–35). Kemmis (2001) believes that communicative space is vital to stimulate practice change. Pennanen et al. (2017) particularly subscribe to notions that agreement and understanding are prefigured by power and relations between individuals. Without attending to relations of power, achieving shared understandings in social space is unlikely to be realised.

Within these spaces new ideas and practices can be introduced in order that they might 'catch on' (Wilkinson et al., 2013) and become sustainable as a means of transforming practices. To achieve this, Hardy et al. (2012) support the notion of practices coming to a new site via a carrier, i.e. a person to "spread the ideas" (p.7). This notion of transference is not merely a direct transplantation of a practice into a new site. Rather, it is through ways in which new understandings of practice are translated, that new ideas can be taken and established in a different site (ibid.). To facilitate this translation process a "supportive niche… [a] fertile ground" (ibid., 2012, p.20) is required for it to become embedded and to flourish. As such, this means the practice architectures need to be those that will enable a new practice to become established. This requires receptivity (Wilkinson et al., 2013) on the part of the people within a site to support new practices, as well as providing time and space to foster its development.

Significantly, language and discourse are cited by Rönnerman and Kemmis (2016) as being fundamental to enable new practices to gain a foothold. Drawing on Wittgenstein (1958) and his notions of language games (whereby language is used to orient and context can change the meaning of language, i.e. notions of 'critical thinking' can take on a different meaning in FE as opposed to in HE) (Pennanen et al., 2017), Kemmis et al. (2017) maintain that language is fundamental to being initiated into new practices in order to know "how to go on" (p.52). Kemmis et al. (2017) continue with their assertion that not only do teachers need to be initiated into language games in order to 'go on' in practice and its attendant sayings, doings and relatings, teachers also need to know how to go on "*amidst* the practice architectures that enable and constrain" (p.53). Nicolini (2012) further adds that Wittgensteinian notions of language serve not only to make sayings and doings comprehensible by enabling people to join together as a group, language also gives a group "coherence and identity" (p.171). Reminding of the central idea of PA being linked to notions of a project (in this case, a project of HE pedagogy), language is the key mediator to achieving consensus amongst a group. Without a consensus and "mutually understood or agreed-upon courses of action" (Edwards-Groves et al., 2016, p.326), a project is not likely to be successfully practised within particular semantic, physical and social spaces within a site.

As part of this initiation into new practices, Edwards-Groves (2014) contends how teachers need to enter and understand "the complexities of the distinctive form of socially established cooperative human activity; be[ing] initiated into arrangements characteristic of the practice, and be[ing] stirred into the language, the activity and the relational dimensions of practices" (p.152). The notion of 'stirring in' is deemed by Rönnerman and Kemmis (2016) to be particularly important in un-sedimenting and changing practices. In order to introduce and sustain new practices, those responsible for stirring in newcomers to particular practices need requisite

experience and understanding of the practice. Rönnerman and Kemmis (2016) advocate using "'old hands' in the field" (p.109) to facilitate and initiate new entrants into particular practices.

Despite the ways in which Kemmis suggests practice can change and be transformed, the particularities of the site ensured that the identities of the teachers remained firmly entrenched within FE practices, and their ability to achieve agentic traction was mired by the extent to which FE practices were sedimented. Their identity formation was restricted to FE. Their capacity to achieve agency and to resist the sedimented FE practices and practice architectures was restricted by the lack of a critical mass of HE teachers, an absence of time and intersubjective spaces in which begin to explore and develop notions of an HE identity, a lack of travelling practices (new HE practices brought into the site), and by an absence of experienced HE teacher 'old hands' to stir them into new HE discourses and practices. Stirring in could potentially have been achieved by college staff, but there was no-one with the requisite familiarity and experience of HE – no 'old hands' – to be able to do this. Arguably, there was no receptivity to do this either. The mono-pedagogic approach to pedagogy and teacher training served only to recognise FE; there was no acceptance that HE was different to FE and conceivably might have different practice needs. As such, there was no hospitable niche for new HE practices to be cultivated.

Partner university staff could have been used to initiate and to bring in new practices, but the surveillance and control regime prohibited direct contact with partner university staff, thereby preventing HE teachers from drawing upon them as a means of orienting and familiarising themselves with the language games (Kemmis et al., 2017) and practices of HE. As a result they did not know "how to go on" (ibid., p.52). Given the sedimented nature of the FE practices, the weakly constructed HE teacher identities and the surveillance culture, the HE teachers were not able to exert

themselves in order to make meaningful choices about their pedagogy and their identity development. Ultimately their ability to achieve agency was blunted by the lack of control the practice architectures afforded them (Eteläpelto et al., 2015). By failing to negotiate or resist the FE practices and arrangements that mediated pedagogic practice, the HE teachers' arguably abnegated agency by acting as operatives rather than agents (Salamon et al., 2016).

The theory of practice architectures feasibly accounts for a number of aspects concerning teacher identity and agency. However, I contend that there is insufficient emphasis upon a number of key factors which are of particular relevance to the site of Shireland College, namely those concerning sociomaterial sensibilities; the novice/beginner teacher status of the HE teacher participants; the influence of teacher biography; and the vocational nature of equine, animal and veterinary nursing. As a societist site ontology, PA is a social ontology, but is one that takes a 'middle path' between individual and societist accounts of social life (Wilkinson and Kemmis, 2014). As part of this it does recognise the contributions of individuals in constituting formations of social life in a site (Schatzki, 2003). That said, as a social ontology rather than an individualistic ontology, it emphasises the social aspect of practice and arguably underplays the roles of individuals in shaping practice in specific instances. This is significant as it means people can be treated in rather collective and generic terms and can fail to take into account how particular characteristics of people can influence the sayings, doings and relatings of particular practices. As such, the theory of PA fails to fully account for the ways in which teacher identities are formed, and the ways in which agency is achieved within the HE teacher participant group at Shireland College. In order to fully account for these phenomena I draw upon selected theoretical concepts from literature relating to materiality and practice, teacher life stages, biography and identity and vocational education.

8.5 Sociomaterial sensibilities

Whilst PA reiterates the notion of practice as always being comprised of sayings, doings and relatings, I contend it pays insufficient attention to aspects of 'doings' as mediated through material-economic arrangements within physical space. The mediation of sayings in semantic space appears to have primacy over notions of doings. Language, whilst arguably being pivotal in forming agreements about and within practices, is not the only element of practice. Grootenboer et al. (2017) appear to confirm this with their suggestion that practice enactment, according to PA "relies on linguistic abilities as tools to harmonise the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements (p.10)".

The perceived lack of detail and substance provided by Kemmis about the material aspects of practice is somewhat surprising given the theory of PA can trace its lineage back to the site ontology espoused by Schatzki (2002). As Schatzki (2001) remarked when discussing enacting practice, "understanding specific practices always involves apprehending material configurations" (p.3). As such, and in concert with Schatzki and the site ontology, Hopwood (2014) defines a site as being a "sociomaterial accomplishment" (p.4). That said, it should be reminded that Schatzki does not subscribe to notions of sociomateriality in terms set out by Latour (2005) and those who contend that non-human artefacts have agentic properties as humans do. Rather, Schatzki approaches materiality from a stance whereby non-human artefacts have potential only to prefigure practice.

Kemmis (2009b) acknowledges how material-economic arrangements can prefigure and act as preconditions to "shape and give content to the 'doing' of the practice" (p.6), but frames material-economic considerations around things such as timetables, teaching load and staffing arrangements (Grootenboer et al., 2017). The notion of 'material' manifests itself in notions more aligned with work and activity, rather than

material more in a sense of buildings, resources, equipment and 'things'. Where material artefacts are implicated in enabling and constraining practice, i.e. where Kemmis suggests how an empty room and its set-up can prime and prefigure practice, details as to how this might manifest itself are not articulated (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008). Arguably, Kemmis's conception of material is somewhat underplayed, and is less defined and less aligned to the sociomaterial awareness advocated by Schatzki (2002). Within the conception of material as espoused by PA, I argue that insufficient attention is given to artefacts and symbols within a physical site and their potential for HE pedagogic practice prefigurement.

Further, there appears to be inadequate connections made between material aspects and its influence on identity. Kemmis (2008) does contend that identity is "framed and constructed by [these] practice architectures" (p.21) (of which material-economic arrangements are a part), yet how this is expressed is not explicitly stated. Rather, language and relations of power and solidarity appear to be more strongly favoured by Kemmis as being influential to identity construction. Therefore, PA does not sufficiently account for the site as a material entity and its role in forming and sustaining identity.

Given the particularity of the site as an FE college with predominantly 16–18-year-old students, and symbols of FE to constantly remind and reiterate the business and culture of FE, I argue that material and physical aspects deserve greater attention than PA provides. The all-encompassing and dominating FE culture is manifested within a physical site; with physical reminders of the nature of the institution. Posters, signage and imagery all served to reinforce the FE culture of the site to those within in it. As Fenwick (2016) argues, material 'stuff' and symbols give meaning to individuals in terms of their resultant relations and communications between each other. The profusion of FE symbols and artefacts, I argue, served to perpetuate the

collective agreements and understandings between individuals within the site. In turn, this further sustained the sedimented practices associated with FE and gave no symbolic reference to the existence of culture and practices outside of FE.

To fully account for the significance of the FE site and its attendant symbols, I begin by drawing on Place-identity as described by Proshansky et al. (1983) in order to more fully account for the physical and material site of Shireland College, and its concomitant role in teacher identity formation and maintenance. Central to place-identity is the notion that a physical place (a building, an institution) will usually have been created or designed in order to fulfil a specific function which have specific people and specific activities associated with it. The people, resources and activities characterise the particular function of the place. Within this, Place-identity contends a specific place will have both a recognition function and a meaning function for people within it. As such, the way a physical and material setting is constituted will enable those to recognise what that physical setting is *for*, and for the meaning of the setting to be made evident to those within in. As part of this, the physical setting will be supplied with particular resources and equipment to enable the recognisable activities to be carried out. The resources and symbols within the place function as "an ever-present background system of meanings of spaces and places which enables the person not only to recognize a setting but to understand its intended purposes and activities in relation to its design and other substantive properties" (p.67). Even the presence of exterior signage with 'FE' on it immediately creates perceptions about the particular meaning and function of the physical setting (Elsbach and Pratt, 2007).

In terms of constructing and sustaining identities, Place-identity particularly resonates with Shireland College. Place-identity contends that whatever job role an individual might have, the characteristics of the physical environment can play a part in helping

an individual to define themselves in that role. Citing a young, new assistant professor as an example, Proshansky et al. (1983) argue that certain resources and symbols are needed to enable them to assume the role of an assistant professor. A desk in an office does not provide the "symbolic and affective associations between the individual and various parts of the physical environment" (p.68). As Proshansky et al. (1983) further explain, the empty desk in an office is not enough to enable the assistant professor to begin to assume the new identity;

> missing are the books, research files, private conversation area and other factors associated with the role of academic-faculty researcher. In effect, the meanings of space and place dictated by the occupationally relevant aspects of his place-identity are not being met by the actual physical setting in which he is expected to play this role… at some level of awareness he may self-consciously be uncertain of his status as an Assistant Professor. (p.68)

Reimagining this scenario with that of Shireland College, I argue that the omnipresent symbols and artefacts of FE, e.g. classroom rules, anti-bullying posters and Childline contact information, as well as the often crudely drawn Levels 1 and 2 assessment artefacts on classroom walls (Chapter 6, sub-section 6.6.2) around the campus served as a "persistent and repetitive" (p.64) recognition function and meaning function of Shireland College as an FE institution. The absence of spaces, symbols and artefacts of HE is akin to the 'empty desk' for the HE teachers. They are unable to assume a new identity as an HE teacher when the physical setting is replete with "persistent and repetitive" (ibid.) reminders of the meaning function of the college. A further facet of identity formation can be attributed to material aspects. As Dittmar (1992) contends, "material possessions also locate people in social-material terms: They signify the social groups we belong to… material possessions are important means of constructing, maintaining, and expressing both personal and social identity" (p.380). Returning to Proshansky et al.'s 'books and files' of the Associate Professor, arguably this can be applied to the HE teachers at Shireland College. Their 'books and files' signified their FE membership and teacher status.

Elsbach and Pratt (2007) also note how artefacts and symbols can reinforce teacher identity by confirming their role and status, i.e. confirming their FE teacher status. Edwards and Usher (2003) further assert that teacher identity is influenced by location. With reference to symbolic markers of the status and type of a particular educational institution, i.e. a school versus a college or a university, they contend that the type of physical campus can contribute towards notions of "constructing professional identity and power of the participating professionals" (p.130). Therefore, without an appropriate physical and material environment, assuming a particular identity can be difficult to achieve. With regard to Shireland College this leaves the HE teachers in an unsatisfactory position with a tenuous and uncertain HE identity, largely constructed without the requisite "symbolic and affective associations" (Proshansky et al., 1983, p.68) of HE. As Fenwick and Landri (2012) contend, a constitutive assemblage of bodies, material elements and symbols and "the force they wield" (p.3) is intimately connected with how teachers construct their identity/identities, and how they are able to achieve agency within particular sites of practice.

Having discussed issues of sociomaterial sensibilities, the following section discusses the impact of novice teacher status upon teacher agency and identity. The discussion will draw upon a range of theories from existing literature, which corresponds with the particular instance of HE teacher agency and identity at Shireland College.

8.6 Novice/beginner teacher status of the HE teacher participants

As remarked upon previously, within its theoretical framings PA does consider the individual within practice enactments, but the extent to which it does so does not sufficiently account for the particularity of the situation at Shireland College. To preface this section (and the following section concerning teacher biography), it is

important to begin with reaffirming the view that individual traits, characteristics and experiences are not necessarily viewed as being deterministic in absolute terms regarding teacher identity and agency. Instead, I view them as being part of a rich and complex set of arrangements and factors upon which identity is formed and reformed, and by which agency can/cannot be achieved. Whilst I subscribe to notions of the site and a social ontology, rather than an individualistic ontology to account for teacher practice, I do contend that certain aspects of practice can be better accounted for by examining particular features of individuals. These are relevant details, which are notable, especially when particular features of individuals are shared across the participant group.

Significantly, I argue that PA insufficiently discriminates teachers by life stage and contend that teachers with less experience are arguably more susceptible to constraint by particular practice architectures than more senior and experienced colleagues. The identity of a new/beginner teacher is arguably less robustly formed and their ability to achieve agency is likely to be impacted upon by confidence and competence issues associated with novice and beginner teachers. Further, I argue that this is exacerbated when teachers are completing in-service teacher training programmes alongside their teaching and course management responsibilities. This situation applies to Shireland College. Aside from one participant, all of the HE teachers were new/relatively new to teaching (one to three years' experience), and all were in their first or second year of HE teaching. Only one participant had had some limited experience of HE teaching at another HE in FE institution. Four of the six participants were completing in-service FE teacher training (one new teacher had completed teacher training elsewhere, and the more experienced participant had completed in-service FE teacher training previously at the college).

Teacher education literature is replete with reports of novice teachers feeling "overwhelmed" (Kagan, 1992, p.144) and facing hitherto unknown "stamina demands" (Ryan, 1996, p.17) in the first few years of teaching. As a result, there is a tendency towards adopting a "survivalist mentality" (Graham and Phelps, 2003, p.4) to "keep their heads above water" (Fantilli and McDougall, 2009, p.814) during this time. As part of this, novice teachers can often experience "feelings of helplessness, frustration" (Pillen et al., 2013, p.674) as they grapple with coping with what Fantilli and McDougall (2009) suggest is "the most difficult time in a teacher's career" (p.814). During this period novice teachers' lack of agency lessens their ability to act and to control the situations they can encounter. Their imperative to survive means their ability to act and to respond can be severely restricted (Caspersen and Raaen, 2014).

There are a number of teacher lifecycles, which attempt to account for the different stages and characteristics of teachers at each point during a teachers' career. Whilst not seeking to present a critique of particular stage based teacher development models, I draw upon a number of them in order to illustrate the broad notion of the novice or beginner early career teacher, and the general characteristics that they have in terms of confidence, competence etc. In doing so I contend it supports my assertion that the status of the participant teachers at Shireland College, i.e. novice (certainly novice in terms of being an HE teacher) contributed to the way HE pedagogic practices were enacted in the classroom and served to sustain FE identities. It further adds to the already present burden and anxiety caused by the surveillance and control regime discussed previously.

Most models depict a somewhat simplistic, linear journey from novice to expert and relate to studies of schoolteachers, but I contend that the general concepts and characteristics are broadly applicable to teachers in an FEC. To contextualise to

Shireland College and to demonstrate reoccurring themes associated with novices, I have borrowed from three models in order to emphasise the significance of the novice teacher status for this discussion. Drawing upon Huberman's (1989) professional life cycle of teachers, Berliner's (1994) Teaching Expertise model, and Katz's (1995) Developmental Stages of Teachers, common characteristics of novice teachers and the particular challenges they face can be identified. Whatever the particular origins of the models cited, the notion of novices and the common characteristics of those learning something new, applies to the HE teachers at Shireland College, and has general accord across the teacher development/life cycle models cited.

Whilst there is not universal agreement amongst the models on how long a teacher might be classified as a 'novice', all of the models agreed that the first stage of the teacher life cycle can last anywhere between one and three years. Katz's (1995) four stages of survival, consolidation, renewal and maturity contend that it can take five years for a teacher to arrive at maturity. Citing the first stage of survival, Katz describes teachers' preoccupation with wondering whether they are going to be able to survive and cites how "feelings of inadequacy and unpreparedness" (p.205) dominate the thoughts of teachers in this stage. Similarly, Huberman's (1989) five-stage model uses the 'survival' metaphor for describing the first survival and discovery stage, a period that can last one to three years. Within this time teachers are faced with a "reality shock… attendant dilemma, continuous trial and error, preoccupation with oneself and one's sense of adequacy" (Huberman, 1993, p.96). Finally, Berliner's (1994) five-stage model suggests that the initial novice phase lasts two years and is followed by at least another one to two years of being an *advanced beginner* before teachers might be deemed to be a *competent teacher.* As a novice teacher, Berliner (1988) asserts that behaviour is conformist and largely inflexible

with teachers tending towards following “rules and procedures they were told to follow” (p.2).

In terms of broad characteristics shared by novice teachers, a number of key aspects appear to be significant namely those regarding anxiety, insecurity, confidence, planning and a predisposition towards rigid rule following. As a consequence of being in survival mode novice teachers are less also likely to challenge and disrupt taken-for-granted practices. With regard to rule following, Tsui (2003) remarked how novices “tend to act according to rules and guidelines laid down by people with authority, whereas expert teachers rely on their own judgment and exercise autonomy when planning” (p.25). Tusi further suggests that novices’ lack of confidence ensured they are far less likely to question practices of their senior colleagues, even if they suspected better alternatives might be available. The pressure to survive and to ‘fit in’ over-rode many other considerations (Caspersen and Raaen, 2014). Given the surveillance and control culture at Shireland College, notions of following authority guidelines are arguably heightened.

I aver that all of these characteristics affected the HE teachers at Shireland College. Indeed, the particularities of the site exacerbated them. Their classroom teaching repertoire was understandably limited and was largely developed in their FE teaching sessions (by virtue of FE constituting the majority of the teaching week) and in accordance with the shared understandings and agreements of what constituted ‘good’ pedagogic practice at the college. Further, for most of the HE teachers their teaching practices were enacted with reference made to the FE-specific teacher training that they had done/were undertaking at the same time. Undertaking concurrent in-house training and a full teaching load was an additional problem (Orr and Simmons, 2010) in terms of physically coping with studying alongside marking, lesson preparation and heavy teaching loads. The FE focus of the training

conceivably rendered teachers “improperly trained” (Araújo et al., 2015, p.97) to teach HE when their only formal teacher education was focused on FE Levels 1–3. Arguably, they were not receiving any training at all to cover the HE teaching aspects of their role. Crucially, during the formative years of the novice teacher they are drawing on the FE teacher training and rules that have been prescribed to them to inform their HE pedagogic practice. This reliance on FE arguably served to further sustain their identity in FE terms rather than ones aligned to HE.

The generalist subject and teaching model typical of FE colleges resulted in teachers having to teach an often diverse range of programmes and subjects to a wide range of students (Salisbury and Jephcote, 2010). The generalist model impacted upon HE, and the teachers’ faced additional pressures and confidence and capability issues by virtue of being required to teach HE subjects beyond their scope of experience and subject knowledge (Araújo et al., 2015). Hobbs (2013) refers to teaching beyond subject knowledge as “out-of-field teaching” (p.289) and attests to it making a significant impression upon teacher confidence and capability. She argues knowledge gaps can make it challenging for teachers to teach confidently, whereas Pillay et al. (2005) warn of teacher competence being “compromised if a teacher is faced with a classroom of students… to teach a subject in which they may have limited discipline knowledge” (p.23). But given the prevalence of the generalist model, coupled with their novice status, the teachers’ lack of agency ensured they did not challenge this. Rather, they accepted the situation and taught beyond their knowledge and experience, despite their lack of confidence to be able to do so effectively. Adopting what Feather (2012a) suggests is quite widespread in HE in FE, they ‘read to teach’, in order to stay “one chapter in front of the students” (p.336).

The lack of planning time and the potential for any free time to be requisitioned by management further added to the pressures and to occluding opportunities to

achieve agency. Their lack of having their own teaching materials and activities (Tsui, 2003) and an overall lack of experience meant they took significantly longer to prepare than experienced teachers. As Calderhead (1984) explained, things such as organising and lesson planning are routine to those with experience. In contrast, novice teachers tackle planning each lesson with a series of “conscious decisions” (p.15). As such, they cannot rely on a more autonomous, spontaneous and experienced base upon which to draw when planning. In contrast, they have to refer to the ‘rule book’ and follow more prescribed regimes. This was compounded by the knowledge that lesson materials would have to be made visible on the VLE and would be subject to unannounced management ‘spot checks’. As such, the college’s control and surveillance regime and tightly prescribed curricula and sedimented ‘ways of doing things’ allowed little room for teachers to begin to develop and achieve agency in their HE classrooms.

The age profile of the majority of the teachers also served as an extra challenge for them. As described by Caspersen and Raaen (2014), “younger (and less experienced) teachers are less certain than older (and more experienced) teachers” (p.192). Notions of certainty can include those regarding identity and their pedagogic practices, as well as their confidence and agency to question and challenge particular practices. Given the animosity many of the older and more experienced FE colleagues directed towards the generally younger HE teachers, this is especially significant. Despite Dickson et al. (2014) insisting that novices need collegial support and to feel a sense of belonging within their community to enable them to feel comfortable, this was largely absent. Instead of experienced colleagues acting as mentors and encouraging novices to network and forge collaborations to develop their sense of agency (Fox et al., 2011), their lack of support and criticism “diminishe[d]s teachers’ self-confidence… corrode[d]s their ability to act with confidence and authority and weaken[d]s trust” (Sachs, 2016, p.423). Caspersen and

Raaen (2014) echo this with their assertion that the failure of experienced colleagues to support new/newer teachers impacts negatively upon agency and "perceived self-efficacy of novice teachers" (p.193).

To draw this section to a close I refer to Thompson and Wolstencroft (2012) and their study about teachers during their first year of teaching in an FEC. Echoing themes discussed here such as new teachers experiencing a lack of support and collaboration from experienced colleagues, and colleagues not sharing resources, Thompson and Wolstencroft (2012) cite teachers who describe their first year in an FEC as being "in the firing line or sent into battle without the resources to protect themselves" (p.21).

With regard to Shireland College, the HE teachers' HE identity and agency was subject to a number of challenges. The hostile climate and lack of collegiality amongst teachers, the deeply entrenched FE culture, and the absence of specific HE teacher training compounded the already present challenges associated with being a novice teacher. This combination of factors effectively precluded the HE teachers from developing an HE teacher identity or being able to achieve any authentic sense of agency.

Having discussed issues of teacher identity and agency, the following section will discuss the impact of teacher biography upon teacher agency and identity. The discussion will draw upon a range of theories from existing literature that corresponds with the particularities of Shireland College.

8.7 Influence of teacher biography on teacher identity and agency

Building upon themes explored regarding the novice status of the HE teacher participants, the discussion continues by attending to aspects of individual biography and its influence upon teacher identity and agency. As Vähäsantanen et al. (2008)

propose, “professional identity is negotiated in the course of the individual’s biography” (p.113). With regard to agency, Priestley et al. (2015) maintain that “agency is always informed by past experience – and in the particular case of teacher agency this concerns both professional and personal experience” (p.5). As such, teachers’ biography and educational background are contributing factors to the ways in which subsequent professional identities are constructed. Indeed, Skerrett (2008) asserts, “formative life experiences shape the teaching self and become major determinants of the teaching experience” (p.144).

As with the example of novice teacher status, I contend that the particular individual aspect of identity and agency is not sufficiently attended to by the theory of PA. In concert with Flores and Day (2006) I argue that biography and background (as well as individual education contexts) are important factors to consider when exploring teacher identity. I further aver that biographies with particular professional and occupational facets, e.g. being a veterinary nurse or a riding instructor further add to how teacher identity is formed and sustained. As a corollary to this, this will influence the ways in which HE pedagogic practices are enacted.

In concert with Jephcote and Salisbury (2009) I contend that identities of teachers are particularly informed by previous (or on-going) work-based and vocational experiences. As such, teachers in vocational subject areas have aspects of pluralism, i.e. a teacher identity and a vocational occupational identity. This is a particular characteristic of teachers in FECs. Given the vocational orientation of FE, it is not surprising that many teachers are recruited for their vocational and occupational expertise and qualifications first (as opposed to their academic expertise and qualifications), with most continuing to be active in the occupation (to a greater or lesser degree) alongside their teaching role. Robson et al. (2004) suggest how teachers in FECs “retain strong allegiances” (p.187) to their profession.

Further, I subscribe to the view proposed by Salisbury et al. (2009) that

> teachers' own experiences as learners are reported as being a powerful and significant influence on their own teaching practice enactments. Early experiences as a school pupil, or later as an apprentice or as a university undergraduate, all act as a knowledge resource. (p.425)

Previous educational experiences are relevant to HE teachers at Shireland College. In contrast to the majority of undergraduate disciplines in the UK, landbased subjects (including animal, equine and veterinary nursing studies) are predominantly taught in small, FE LBCs via a validating university partner arrangement, rather than at a university (Rapley, 2014). With reference to the HE teachers at Shireland College, this is germane. Of the six HE teachers, five had experience at either FE or HE level of studying animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies in a LBC (the other studied animal/equine/veterinary nursing at a university). All of the HE teachers were veterinary nurses and/or professionally qualified riding instructors/competitive riders. As such, they broadly shared educational experiences of studying animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies in a college setting and they shared and maintained "strong allegiances" (Robson et al. 2004, p.187) to their vocational/occupational backgrounds. Between them there was a shared understanding about the broad vocational subject area of animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies. As discussed in Chapter 1, these subject areas emanate from an occupational base, which does not have a strong scientific evidence base upon which to inform practice. As a result, there is significant emphasis on these dual-profession teachers ensuring that learners are equipped with practical competence and capabilitity for the workplace.

Before entering the teaching profession, new teachers will have spent thousands of hours in school and college as pupil and student, and can draw upon pedagogic strategies and ideas they have come across when they were students themselves, through Lortie's (2002) concept of the 'apprenticeship of observation'. Smagorinsky

and Barnes (2014) suggest how this can provide new teachers with "'default options' to fall back on when they are uncertain about how to proceed pedagogically" (p.30). As such, the notion of 'modelling' is introduced, whereby new teachers can 'model' their teaching practices upon what they have seen and experienced previously. As part of this, the modelling can be informed by current practices within a particular institution, and by their own teacher training. With reference to Shireland College this could include modelling based up the agreed and shared FE pedagogic approaches and upon the FE teacher training.

Given the predominance of personal experiences of education within LBCs (typically taught by staff with a teacher profile characteristic of landbased FE, i.e. vocational qualifications and occupational experience, even for HE) and/or studying animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies for a degree, it is arguably not unreasonable to posit that these particular experiences might well be referred to when enacting HE pedagogic practices. As such, and with respect to the novice/early career teacher status, the absence of HE teacher training and the dominance of FE, HE teachers at Shireland College might conceivably use their experience of their own landbased education to 'fall back on', as Smagorinsky and Barnes (2014) propose. As Buchanan (2015) remarks, "teachers construct a self, in part, out of their own educational experiences. The 'apprenticeship of observation' has a profound influence on one's understanding of the work and role of a teacher as well as on their own teaching practice" (p.702).

The issue of biography and having studied vocational HE (predominantly in a college setting) has further implications for HE teacher identity construction. With regard to HE in FE literature the discourse of deficit generally prevails with practically orientated vocational HE qualifications when compared to 'traditional' degree subjects offered within universities (Shields and Masardo, 2015). Vocational HE and

HE in FE is often viewed as being HE for less able students from lower income, WP backgrounds (Fraser et al., 2009). As such, it has a perception of being of "less status than the 'mainstream' undergraduate education; for a few, it is not 'real' higher education" (Parry et al., 2012, p.23). Similarly, Eland (2008) uses a "poor relation" analogy, commenting how HE in FE has "struggled to prove its credentials in quality, parity and expertise" (p.85). There are those that judge HE in FE to be 'second class' and 'low status' compared to HE found in a university (Parry et al., 2012). Robinson (2012) adds to the discussion with her assertion that students studying HE in FE perceive there is a "stigma" (p.463) associated with FECs being viewed as being "lower-status institution[s]" (ibid.).

Notions of stigma and status are of relevance to HE teachers at Shireland College. As such it can be viewed as a contributing factor to their inability to construct a robust HE teacher identity. When considering identity, notions of self are discussed in relation to notions of the 'other'. MacQuarrie (2010) states that the "distinction between the self and other is central to the establishment of a coherent sense of 'me' and 'not me'" (p.635). As such, how one defines or characterises one's own self and identity is by knowing 'self' and holding it up against the 'other'. As part of this, a dominant 'in-group' can be seen to 'other' an out-group, whereby the 'othering' of the in-group upon those at the margins results in the identity and self of those at the margins being defined (and negatively compared) in relation to those in the dominant in-group (Mengstie, 2011). As a consequence of this, the othering can serve to reinforce hierarchies between in the in and out-groups (Fine, 1994).

The sense of being the 'other' as experienced by the HE teachers at Shireland College, was contributed to by virtue of their shared experience of studying a lower status vocational HE qualification, the fact they had an FE and or HE in FE

educational background themselves, and because they were teaching lower status vocational HE qualifications in a low status FEC setting.

When discussing notions of 'other', the literature describes those characterised as the 'not me' group in terms of being in an out-group on the margins (Magolda, 2000). They are subordinate and are typically disadvantaged and undervalued (Ssebunnya et al., 2009) by those in the dominant in-group. Borrowing from Gramsci (2005), HE in FE teachers experience a sense of being of being a 'subaltern', i.e. of inferior rank when compared to HE peers in a university who teach traditional degree subjects. Their sense of inferiority and apparent lack of academic capital ensured they did not perceive they had salience with groups of teachers involved with university HE. Their perceived lack of accessibility and fit (Bruner, 1957) to the university HE teacher in-group sustained them in a position of 'other' compared to the HE landscape of which universities dominated. Their peripheral positioning in HE heightened their perceptions of inadequacy.

They held university HE in higher esteem than HE in FE, with the esteem seemingly stemming from an arguably idealised, stereotyped view of university HE which derived from an "exaggerated belief" (Allport, 1954, p.191) implying a "discrepancy between an objectively ascertainable reality and a subjective perception of that reality" (Van den Berghe, 1996, p.354). In contrast to more quantifiable perceptions based upon personal experience, the HE teachers had a mythologised view of university HE. Perhaps compounded by not having studied at a university, or as a consequence of not being able (or allowed) to develop relationships and collaborations with HE peers (at the partner university or in the wider HE sector), the shared perception of university HE was that of being 'better' than HE in FE. Further, the shared view that neither they nor HE in FE could achieve parity of esteem with university HE served to fuel the mystique surrounding it, and their shared sense of

inferiority. As Mason (2008) described when comparing herself as an HE in FE teacher to HE teachers at her partner university, “we FE staff regularly felt affirmed in our ‘otherness’ as somehow lesser beings – cruder, less intelligent, and not really capable of working to the same standards” (p.9).

As neophyte HE teachers, confidence and competence issues cited previously were compounded by unique biographical factors. These included their shared FE college/ LBC and/or studying a vocational animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies student background, the fact of teaching HE in an FE college, teaching a vocational degree subject and teaching beyond their subject knowledge base. Their shared biographies resulted in them feeling ill prepared and insufficiently equipped with the requisite high-level specialist knowledge HE demands. A lack of appropriately aligned pedagogic knowledge, and teaching HE in an FEC all contributed to fuelling feelings of inadequacy and ‘otherness’. This impacted upon confidence, resulting in a lack self-efficacy and belief to enable them to construct an HE identity. Whether arguments surrounding vocational and academic degrees, and the legitimacy of HE in FE are valid is not the point. Rather, it is how the HE teachers *perceived* it to be which weakened their confidence and sense of agency as a legitimate member of the wider HE academic community.

Issues of teacher identity and agency have been discussed in conjunction with theories espoused by Kemmis and Grootenboer and by a number of relevant theorists. The final section will discuss the theme of Pedagogic Risk Aversion at Shireland College, and will draw up a range of theories from the existing literature to frame the discussion.

8.8 Pedagogic risk aversion

8.8.1 Introduction

Having discussed two of the three themes, at this juncture it is useful to recall that the HE teachers were operating within a site constrained by sedimented FE practice architectures where surveilling and checking (by management, colleagues, students and self-checking) is the norm. This was exacerbated by teachers being novice, lacking expert, specialist subject knowledge and lacking HE teacher training.

The final theme in this discussion is largely a culmination of these practice architectures and the themes of surveillance and control and of teacher identity and agency. The collective manifestation of the particular circumstances resulted in HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment, which was risk averse. Before discussing what these practices 'look like' in the classroom, and how PA and other theories contribute towards HE teachers enacting risk-averse pedagogic practices, it is pertinent to preface the theme with some definitions of risk and risk aversion.

8.8.2 Revisiting the Chapter 2 literature review

Prior to discussing how the theory of Practice Architectures accounts for the theme of Pedagogic risk aversion, I refer back to the contextualizing and sensitising literature discussed in Chapter 2, in order to ascertain where my findings accord or not, with themes reported in the literature. Of the three themes identified within this study, there is significant accord with the existing literature. The risk aversion demonstrated by the teacher participants at Shireland College did chime with Groves (2015) and her assertion that pedagogic practices were reduced to "input-output processes" (p.32), to remain "safely orthodox" (ibid., p.33) for fear of reprimand by managers who use "constant punitive monitoring" (ibid., p.32). The risk aversion primarily manifested itself in terms of being "recast along increasingly instrumental lines" (Simmons, 2016, p.693). Similarly Usher (2009) characterised risk averse

pedagogies that emphasised instrumental alignment to “sets of behavioural objectives” (p.176) to demonstrate “the correct answer in the most efficient way” (ibid.) to make learners “more competent and ‘employable’” (ibid.).

8.8.3 Definitions of risk

What risk is and how it is considered conceptually is contested. According to Rolfe (2010), “risk is integral to innovation and to advanced, complex societies” (p.7). Hills (2007) defines risk in terms of the “uncertainty associated with an outcome in a given situation” (p.336), whereas Adams (1995) characterises risk as being “the product of the probability and utility of some *future* event. The future is uncertain and inescapably subjective; it does not exist except in the minds of the people attempting to anticipate it” (p.30). Despite Rolfe’s contention that risk is positive in the sense of it being integral to innovation, risk is increasingly synonymous with undesirability or in some way being perceived negatively and, therefore, as something to avoid (Fox, 1999). Le Fevre (2014) describes risk as a cost to an individual, with cost being expressed in negative terms such as “performance anxiety, fear of failure, [and] the amount of effort that is needed to succeed” (p.61). Indeed, McWilliam and Singh (2004) suggest how “risk is no longer about the probability of losses and gains – risk simply means danger” (p.23). Further, risk can be viewed as being threatening to “social order” (Lupton, 1999, p.3).

8.8.4 Risk aversion

How the uncertainty and the perceived dangers of risk manifest themselves is via means by which individuals seek to manage the dangers of risk. By avoiding ‘risky behaviours’, individuals can mitigate against the threat of risk and its inherent dangers. In so doing they are able to protect themselves from the real or imagined danger presented by risk (Le Fevre, 2014). Lerner and Tiedens (2006) suggest risk

can provoke feelings of fear and anxiety, with fearful individuals being likely to make "risk-avoidant choices" (p.124) as a means of minimising fear and of remaining safe.

Hills (2007) describes mitigating against risk in terms of being risk averse, i.e. to prefer "'safe' situations that are familiar and for which outcomes are predictable" (p.336). Because an awareness of risk creates "uncertainty and unease" (Joffe, 1999, p.3) amongst individuals, adopting risky behaviour can be deemed as being "socially unacceptable volitional behavior with a potentially negative outcome" (Turner et al*.,* 2004, p.93). People adopting risky behaviours can be viewed as being 'at risk' or 'the other'. When compared to a particular group or culture, such 'otherness' is associated with being beyond the norm (Lupton, 1999). Consequently this can be viewed as being deviant or rebellious in some way, and is something to be avoided by those who consider themselves to be within the relative safety and acceptability of the norm. Drawing on Foucault's concept of governmentality "to discipline and normalize", Lupton (1999, p.61) suggests individuals normalise themselves by comparing themselves to others in order to ascertain if they "fall within the norm or outside it" (ibid.).

Anxious to remain within accepted parameters of normality and acceptance, risk-averse individuals self-regulate to prevent indulging in risky behaviours, thereby shaping their behaviours and practices in order to comply with notions of 'good', normal practice (O'Leary, 2013). In so doing, they develop what McWilliam and Singh (2004) define as a "risk consciousness" (p.24) whereby particular types of work and working result, chiefly those characterised by on-going monitoring of self and of others and the enactment of "professional performance to guard against danger" (ibid.). By avoiding the significant uncertainty associated with risky behaviours and situations (Bowen et al., 2015), risk-averse individuals will seek

certainty by conforming to regulations and rules that ensure the continuance of recognised and legitimised practices (Cerna, 2014).

8.8.5 Literature to theoretically account for HE teacher risk aversion

A recurring theme in this discussion has been to articulate where practice architectures theoretically accounts for HE teacher pedagogic practice at Shireland College. Conversely, I have attempted to discuss where PA fails to fully account for these practices, and to propose alternative theories which contribute to presenting a fully theorised account of HE practice at Shireland College. Within the following discussion I will examine how PA does broadly account for the risk-averse teacher pedagogic practices enacted at Shireland College. Further, and drawing up literature concerning how the HE teachers' prior knowledge and academic expectations of HE students impacted upon the ways in which they enacted their HE practices, I will discuss where PA does not fully account for these risk-averse practices. Prior to this, I will briefly articulate what risk-averse teacher pedagogic practices consist of, and their implications for teachers and teaching.

8.8.6 Risk-averse HE teacher practices – definitions

According to Wilkins and Wood (2009), "educational management has increasingly become dominated by avoidance of risk" (p.294). This view is echoed by Dohmen and Falk (2010) with their assertion that "teachers are more risk averse than employees in other professions" (p.257). Similarly, Bailey (2014) suggests how teacher risk aversion is increasingly linked to teachers needing to attain targets to ensure "survival in the workplace" (p.672), whilst Sachs (2016) contends that teachers are increasingly "conservative and risk-averse" (p.423) by virtue of working within controlled and repressive performance regimes (Stanford, 2008). In terms of risk-averse teacher practices, there are a number of ways in which they are enacted.

By adopting a ‘what works’ approach to pedagogy, risk-averse practices tend to be target-driven, teacher-controlled, transmissive and closely aligned to assessment. As Lupton and Hempel-Jorgensen (2012) argue, these are pedagogic modes that teachers can rely upon; they are more likely to succeed when adopting them. Thus far this chapter has outlined conceptions of risk and risk aversion. As mentioned a number of times within this chapter, HE pedagogic enactments at Shireland have been described as being risk averse, teacher-centered, transmissive, surface and instrumental. At this juncture it is worth defining them in order to settle upon agreed conceptions of the terms.

8.9 HE expectations from the sector

As a preface and to provide context, it is useful to remind what expectations the QAA has for institutions providing HE. According to *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality* of *The Quality Code* (QAA, 2012), Indicator 3 – Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship – states

> Staff create opportunities for learning which are effective by recognising the value of both individual and collaborative learning activities, the value of learning how to learn and that learning is about interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflection, not just on repetition of facts. (p.12)

It continues by stating in its expectation about learning and teaching that:

> Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. (p.24)

Finally, it outlines the expectation that through “creative and transformational learning” (p.5) HE students will “develop further as active and independent learners who recognise and take responsibility for their own learning” (p.6).

8.10 Teacher-centered and student-centered pedagogies

When describing broad pedagogic approaches the literature tends to present something of a binary, whereby teachers might be characterised as being either student-centered or teacher-centered. Since the 2000s HE has begun a process of repositioning, whereby more instructive modes of teaching favoured by proponents of teacher-centeredness have moved towards more student-centered pedagogies (Moate and Cox, 2015). Kirstein and Kunz (2015) support this view with their assertion that recent literature increasingly advocates the adoption of more holistic student-centered teaching and learning approaches in HE.

Cannon and Newble (2000) define student-centered teaching approaches as those that “emphasise student responsibility and activity in learning rather than content or what the teachers are doing” (pp.16-17). As part of this, the development of higher-order student thinking (Gyamtso and Maxwell, 2012; Vedenpää and Lonka, 2014) is central, as is the development of student independence and autonomy (Weimer, 2013). In terms of pedagogic practices, activity in student-centered classrooms often revolves around collaborative student interactions and peer-group working (Pedersen and Liu, 2003) as well as discussion and discovery.

In contrast, teacher-centeredness operates on the premise of teacher control, with control encompassing what is taught and how it is taught. Wright (2011) contends such approaches result in the teacher having full responsibility for selecting and arranging lesson content, with students consigned to assuming more passive, teacher dependant roles of accurately recording and reproducing information. This is supported by Ecclestone (2007) and her contention that teacher-centeredness “encourage[s] compliant, narrow responses” (p.318) from students.

8.10.1 Transmissive pedagogies

Typically, teacher-centered pedagogies rely on transmissive approaches and those which are highly structured and prescribed, usually with set materials and texts (Gibbs, 1992). Further, it is suggested that teacher-centeredness fails to promote student interaction and discussion. Facilitating conversation to help students to grapple with that which is already known, and that which is new to them, is essential to enable students to gain deep knowledge (Richardson, 1997).

Kember (1997) characterises conceptions of teaching as a spectrum consisting of five loci, with 'Teaching as imparting information' at one pole and 'Teaching as bringing about conceptual change and intellectual development in the student' at the other. Kember (ibid.) conceives 'Teaching as imparting information' as a transmissive approach, where the teacher is styled as 'presenter' who is concerned with reductionist knowledge transfer to students who act as "passive recipient[s]" (p.262). More didactic approaches are favoured over more student-centered approaches such as discussion, problem based or experiential learning. Indeed, Thuraisingam et al. (2014) contend that these approaches preclude students from developing creative and critical thinking skills.

More recently, Biggs and Tang (2011) characterise teacher-centered approaches as being surface and describe it thus:

> teaching piecemeal, not bringing out the intrinsic structure of the topic or subject; assessing for independent facts, inevitably the case when using short-answer and multiple-choice tests; teaching and especially assessing, in a way that encourages cynicism: for example, 'I hate teaching this section, and you're going to hate learning it, but we've got to cover it'; providing insufficient time to engage in the tasks; emphasising coverage at the expense of depth; creating undue anxiety or low expectations of success. (pp.25–26)

8.10.2 Surface approaches to teaching

The emphasis on knowledge transfer and acquisition undermines more holistic notions of learning as a process. Polly et al. (2014) are critical of transmissive approaches, arguing that developing student understanding that is deep and more sophisticated is forsaken in order to ensure time-efficient 'delivery' of essential knowledge. Wright (2011) shares this concern with their assertion that students who merely reproduce information do so at the expense of developing deeper levels of knowledge and understanding. Rather than student learning being transformative, student 'learning' remains restricted to merely confirming knowledge and information that has been acquired from teachers (Molesworth et al., 2009).

8.10.3 Instrumental approaches to teaching

With teacher-centered, transmissive approaches, the topic or subject is the focus, with learning typically conceived as being linear and with a distinct orientation towards assessment (Polly et al. 2014). Murray (2013) characterises the assessment focus as being one which is instrumental; as such, a pedagogic approach which emphasises end product attainment via "high-stakes testing regimes and performativity and audit cultures" (p.5). An acquisitional learning model, Ransome (2011) argues that as part of teacher-centeredness, instrumentalism has crept into the UK HE sector not by virtue of its pedagogic benefit to students, but because of administrative convenience. Furedi (2012) describes instrumentalist teaching approaches in more stern terms, suggesting it is 'irresponsible and calculating' by virtue of its quest for 'box-ticking' and attaining qualifications and outcomes over actual student learning. Avis (2012) concurs and suggests how such approaches preclude students from attaining the "epistemic gains" (p.7) associated with deep teaching and learning approaches that emphasise process not product.

To summarise, I conceive teacher-centered in terms of controlled, teacher-directed pedagogies that utilise transmissive approaches. These approaches are characterised by knowledge transmission and acquisition which emphasise surface 'fact accumulating and reproduction' rather than deeper, conceptual understandings. Finally, instrumentalism is characterised via end product assessment goals.

8.11 Risk-averse HE teacher practices – drivers and pedagogic practices

Pedagogic risk aversion can be considered as having multiple catalysts. A significant contributor concerns student achievement. The outcome of students completing successfully (be it a module or an award) is a significant motivator for teachers. Pressure from management and from students to attain an award or qualification results in teachers viewing themselves as being personally responsible for the performance of their students (Bailey, 2014). Conceiving teaching as a high-stakes endeavour, Kinchin et al. (2016) suggests how this pressure, in concert with the fear of teachers achieving low success outcomes, results in them seeking alternative pedagogic strategies, namely "playing it safe" (p.12), in order to achieve success. Bailey (2014) also uses the 'playing it safe' metaphor, arguing that such is the pressure on teachers to retain students and to "eliminate the risk of failure" (p.670), teachers will resort to adopting explicit practices to guide and coach students to enable them to achieve the highest marks possible. Risk concerns notions of rewards and returns, but for risk-averse teachers, enacting risky pedagogic practices is simply not worth it; there is no teacher reward or return for students performing badly or not completing.

Kincheloe (2012) defines risk-averse practices in terms of being those concerned with "simplified, context-stripped information for students use on proficiency and standards tests" (p126). Banaji et al. (2013) further assert that teaching to the test with too great an emphasis on examinations and content contributes to making both

teachers and students risk averse, as well as stunting the development of divergent thinking. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) describe risk-averse practices as being "locked into a transmission mode where pre-specified content can be passed on to the student and assessed in a conventional form" (p.275). Arguably, by emphasising "end product attainment" (Bailey, 2014, p.672) over a more rounded and holistic approach to student learning and development, an instrumental teaching approach suppresses pedagogic experimentation and innovation. By adhering to highly structured lessons (Hills, 2007) and by adopting risk-averse practices, teachers are better able to control and therefore predict and manage outcomes.

Controlling outcomes is viewed by Lupton and Hempel-Jorgensen (2012) as being a hallmark of teacher risk aversion. Characterised by an emphasis on students always being 'on task' through "whole-class teacher-led activities in which the teacher can maintain surveillance and control" (p.611), risk-averse teachers stick to the script and teaching to the test. This view is supported by Le Fevre (2014) with their assertion that student voice and student-centeredness threatens teacher control. Despite highly controlled pedagogic practices being associated with a "lack of creativity and convergence or standardisation" (Perryman et al., 2011, p.187) by maintaining control, teachers are better able to deliver successful outcomes for themselves and their students, such as attaining qualifications or specific grades.

Canning (2007) comments that risk aversion can also result in teachers failing to question traditional teaching practices within an institution. Where there is a taken–for-granted, standardized institutional approach to pedagogy, Kincheloe (2012) argues that it is easier to identify teachers who are not conforming. Therefore, by sticking to agreed, tried and tested approaches, teachers are less likely to be monitored as closely as those who are operating outside of agreed norm boundaries. Further, Sachs (2016) believes that 'tried and tested' pedagogic practices "creates

timidity" (p.417) amongst risk-averse teachers, but they are adopted because they are considered to be safe and less risky.

Transmissive, didactic approaches are often used in preference to more creative and student-centered approaches amongst risk-averse teachers. Safer and arguably easier in the sense of requiring less creativity and time to prepare, Hargreaves (2008) suggests how a "fear of poor achievement may make creative strategies threatening" (p.230). Williams (2012) adds how this failure to challenge by preferring to comply with institutionalised practices can deter teachers from adopting more distinctive, unorthodox approaches. Examples of these might include questioning beyond known boundaries of knowledge or affording students opportunities self-guided learning without explicit directions (Hills, 2007). However, such approaches arguably require teachers to have the confidence and courage in their own subject and pedagogic knowledge, and confidence in their students to be able to function and to achieve without significant guidance (Hargreaves, 2008; Burnard and White, 2008). Teachers without this certainty and courage are more likely to follow set and highly controlled pedagogic routines (Caspersen and Raaen, 2014; Woolfolk Hoy, 2004), viewing the pursuance of more innovative pedagogic paths as being "too risky" (Beddoe, 2010, p.1284).

Given the imperative for students to succeed, teachers' willingness to be more pedagogically bold can be stifled by anxiety and fear of students and of themselves, failing (ibid.). Therefore they are often reticent to stray too far from the comparative safety of what Kincheloe describes as (2012) "teacherproof scripted lessons" (p.111). That is not to say that teachers are necessarily happy with adopting such approaches. Indeed, Ball (2003) believes that for some teachers to achieve success, the pragmatic compulsion to rely upon risk-averse 'knowledge delivery' pedagogies can result in "values schizophrenia" (p.221). Arguably, weakening teacher autonomy

and limiting latitude for exerting judgement and discretion (Dominelli, 2004), teachers knowingly forfeit their authentic pedagogic values and actions in order to “live an existence of calculation” (Ball, 2003, p.217) by adopting risk-averse practices which conform with expected types of “impression and performance” within their institution (ibid., p.221).

Having outlined how teacher risk aversion can play out in classrooms, I continue with discussing how the theory of practice architectures accounts for HE teacher risk-averse pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College.

8.11.1 Practice architectures and HE teacher risk aversion

Practice Architectures is largely consistent with the theme of pedagogic risk aversion. The only significant area where I propose it is not fully consistent with teacher risk aversion, concerns teachers’ prior knowledge of the HE students and of FE animal/equine/veterinary nursing students more generally. In order to fully account for the significance of this particular student knowledge and its contribution to risk-averse pedagogic practice enactments, I will draw on literature beyond the theory of PA to account for this particular phenomenon. Prior to this, I continue with discussing how PA theoretically accounts for risk-averse HE pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College.

As discussed earlier within this chapter, Shireland College has highly sedimented practice architectures, which sanction and legitimise particular sayings, doings and relatings within overlapping cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements. The particular meshing of these arrangements prefigure the enactment of risk-averse pedagogic practices. Given that these have been discussed at length previously, my intention here is not to repeat earlier discussion. Rather, I

intend to draw together particular aspects, which directly relate to the theme of risk aversion.

The surveillance and control regime creates a “background ‘noise’ of constant scrutiny” (Beddoe, 2010, p.1286) against which HE teachers enact their HE pedagogic practices. Self-surveillance and self-regulation are routinely practised. The regime propagates a discourse of suspicion, reporting and complaining, arguably aspects which bring about “risk-adverse dispositions” (Sachs, 2016, p.146) and “defensive practice” within HE classrooms (Beddoe, 2010, p.1286). The regime of teaching observation and spot-checking is a taken-for-granted practice, as is the universal acceptance of the taken-for-granted, narrow and ‘correct’ view of acceptable pedagogic practices (Kincheloe, 2002). The culture of mistrust, in concert with observations and unannounced spot checks by those with little or no HE experience themselves, creates frustration and anxiety (Moodie and Wheelahan, 2009).

Ofsted was viewed by teachers as being the approved template for ‘good’ and legitimate teaching, and one that was endorsed by management. Gray (2010) asserts that the Ofsted criteria are “prescriptive and formulaic”, serving to provide teachers with “a ‘recipe’ for the perfect lesson” (p.2). Despite guidance from Ofsted not publically advocating or favouring any particular pedagogic approach (NASUWT, n.d.), the ‘four-part lesson plan’ was widely viewed as being what Ofsted (and consequently, managers) were looking for. Consisting of a starting activity followed by an introduction with objective setting, development and activities, and a concluding plenary, this format was one that was used for all classes, even HE ones. Whilst Gray (2010) suggested HE teachers considered this as clashing with preferred HE practices, they felt compelled to adopt ‘Ofsted approved’ approaches. Failure to adopt a standardized approach to pedagogy within the sanctioned norms would soon

recognised (Kincheloe, 2002). Even an HE pedagogic success could risk being interpreted by a manager as being non-compliance with the 'Ofsted way'. Indeed, this gap in expectation was identified by Gray (2010). Referring to college HE teachers during routine college observations, Gray reported how a teacher had been given an unsatisfactory Grade 4 for their HE lesson. Observed by a college based non-subject specialist, the teacher gained a Grade 4 when engaged in classroom tasks that had previously been judged as being an example of 'good practice' by the external examiner and an HE university colleague. Therefore, the pressure to maintain risk-free pedagogic practice in the light of the on-going scrutiny was deemed essential (Bailey, 2014). Arguably, the practice architectures functioned as a means of controlling and coercing HE teachers into enacting particular pedagogic practices, despite not being those that are necessarily best aligned to HE (Burnard and White, 2008).

The sedimented practice architectures controlled time and served to dictate what HE teachers taught and when they could teach it. Control over a full timetable limited time to develop HE pedagogic practice. In turn this resulted in "conservative approaches to pedagogy" (Orr and Simmons, 2010, p.2) where material must be covered within a limited time frame before moving on to the next topic. The fear of losing control over time and/or the students resulted in pedagogic practices which can reduce teaching to being "primarily technical" (ibid.), and favouring teacher-centered approaches. The practice architectures ensured there was no time for consolidation; material must be 'delivered' in as efficient a manner as possible. This was exacerbated when teachers' time and timetables were controlled to the extent that they did not always teach within their sphere of expertise, and/or they did not get the opportunity to teach the same modules again. Hashweh (2005) argues that denying teachers repeat opportunities to consolidate knowledge and to refine

pedagogic practices precludes them from developing the “wisdom of practice that the teacher acquires when repeatedly teaching a certain topic” (p.290).

With regard to the second theme of teacher identity and agency, the sedimented practice architectures concerning sanctioned language and practices regarding teaching, training and collegiality, ensured the novice and inexperienced teachers were prone to pedagogic risk aversion. Hills (2007) suggests that new teachers are trying to survive and cope and have “good reasons to avoid risky educational situations” (p.349). Operating in survival mode, moving outside of sanctioned practice spheres is “inherently risky and requires courage” (Burnard and White, 2008, p.673). Given their relative inexperience, their lack of confidence resulted in embracing more traditional and didactic pedagogic practices as they sought to stay in control and to maintain the agreed status quo (Williams et al., 2012). Rewarded by students passing and completing, students not complaining, and staying out of the direct glare of management scrutiny, teachers’ risk aversion was a safe and pragmatic choice (Williams, 2012).

Broadly it can be argued that the landscape of fear and mistrust was intimately related to the enactment of safe, risk-averse HE pedagogic practices. Cerna (2014) argues “trust is the key to the success…in 21st century learning systems. It enables stakeholders to take risks, facilitates interactions and co-operation, and reduces the need for control and monitoring” (p.25). McEvily et al. (2003) characterise trust as comprising of three elements: “an expectation, a willingness to be vulnerable and a risk-taking act” (p.93). Piirto (2004) further suggests how “developing group trust is imperative if people are to take risks ... and be transformed” (p.48). This is echoed by Burnard and White (2008) who argue that when teachers are “encouraged to collaborate, higher levels of trust and enhanced collegiality allow for increased risk-taking” (p.673). The sedimented practices of surveillance and control, coupled with

the teachers' lack of agency and experience precluded trusting relationships to be established. Teachers' practices were sustained as being risk-averse by virtue of the lack of belief that any risk taking or moving beyond accepted norms would be supported by those around them (Timperley, 2008).

As discussed previously (Chapter 4, section 4.7), practices can travel; practices can change. Agreed sayings, doings and relatings and arrangements within any site do not come into being from no-where. A site does not operate in a vacuum. Practices are the result of traditions and of the actions of people in a particular place. As a corollary, such traditions and actions do not come out of 'thin air'; they too have origins, which can reflect forces and influences external to a particular site.

With regard to Shireland College and its culture of mistrust and control it is critical to ask "where has it come from?". Are the practice architectures solely a reflection of individuals and internal influences, or are they symptomatic of something else; something beyond and external to the particular site? Within PA Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) describe how practices beyond a particular site can shape the form and conduct of other practices. Termed by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) as meta-practices, these are practices beyond the extra-individual arrangements of a site, and, like extra-individual arrangements they have the ability to shape the form and conduct of other practices by shaping "discursive, material and cultural conditions" and sanctioning what is "doable and sayable" (Wilkinson et al., 2010, p.69). Examples include government policy and educational legislation.

I contend that individual and local practices alone do not fully account for pedagogic risk aversion. Rather, possibilities for action are further enabled and constrained by meta-practices that operate as practice architectures in a broader landscape beyond Shireland College (Kemmis, 2008). Specifically, I maintain that external regulatory meta-practice arrangements of performativity and accountability, and of the

inspectorial regime of Ofsted contributed to the culture of mistrust and control at Shireland College, which in turn resulted in risk-averse HE teaching practice enactment. Indeed, arguably each of the three themes within this discussion can trace their origins back to meta-practices external to the site.

8.11.2 Meta-practices and HE teacher risk aversion – Performativity and accountability

In education the language of performativity and accountability is widely recognised and widely used. According to Ball (2003),

> Performativity is a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organizations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of 'quality', or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement. The issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial. (p.216)

More simply defined, Locke (2015) arguably strips it to its core: of performativity being a "quest for efficiency: the very best input/output equation" (p.248). Blackmore (2004) characterises performativity more in terms of relating to people and of "'being seen' to be doing something efficiently" (p.441) and "'being seen to be good'" (p.454). All-pervading in sanctioned practices within an institution, Blackmore defines performativity as compliance as a means of demonstrating the value and productivity of an individual to the external world.

In terms of performativity within educational contexts Elliott (2012) argues its omnipresence is "at the expense of educational values" (p.424). Concerned with performance management within a marketized and competitive landscape, performativity privileges financial and performance efficiencies, rather than 'gains' more aligned with humanistic and democratic notions of education for the public

good and for individual personal development (Wilkinson et al., 2010). Through on-going judgement and recording, teachers are expected to meet and comply with a constant and ever-changing set of expectations and demands (Ball, 2003).

Like performativity, accountability in education is arguably a ubiquitous and pervasive term (Sugrue and Mertkan, 2017). Defined by Acquah (2012) as denoting "a minimum expectation or standard regarding the effectiveness of a particular activity" (p.2), accountability in educational institutions is reflected in the language of quality improvement, performance indicators, benchmarking, league tables and student feedback (Fletcher, 2015). By producing and publishing performance data, educational institutions are mandated to evidence their accountability to students, employers, the government and the taxpayer (BIS, 2014). Whilst couched in terms of providing clear and transparent data to enable customer choice and to ensure value for money, the meaningfulness and the underlying premise regarding the metrics used to measure educational institutions in terms of quality and improvement is contested (Ludlow et al., 2010).

In contrast to notions of improvement and quality, Wilkinson et al. (2010) talk of accountability as being a "form of accountancy" (p.68), where finance, cost effectiveness and auditing take precedence. Bailey (2014) shares similar views with her assertion that it privileges competition and seeks to align accountability firmly within the responsibility remit of individuals. As echoed by Ball (2003), "workers feel themselves accountable" (p.219).

Solbrekke and Englund (2011) offer a more nuanced view by suggesting that control at the expense of trust is the modus operandi for accountability, with transparency being a vehicle by which individuals' work can be more easily 'seen' and therefore, judged and controlled. This position is reinforced by Biesta (2004) with his contention that far from being about enhancing quality as a means of enhancing student

learning, the pervasive accountability regime in education has “antidemocratic tendencies” and is little more than ensuring teachers are personally “answerable to” (p.234).

As a result of its external auditing and its public nature, accountability diminishes teachers’ agency and scope for professional freedom and judgement. Perceived as a “negative instrument of social and political control” (Fielding, 2001, p.699), accountability results in teachers facing an inescapable compulsion to adhere to a set of metrics, which must be conformed to and complied with (Solbrekke and Englund, 2011).

8.11.3 Meta-practices and HE teacher risk aversion – Ofsted

Whilst discussed in Chapter 2, it is worth reminding of the meta-practice of Ofsted and its influence upon the ways in which HE teachers enacted their HE pedagogic practices. A particular aspect under the performativity and accountability umbrella concerns Ofsted. As part of systems for managing quality and as self-assessment performance evidence for Ofsted inspectors (O’Leary and Brooks, 2014), the gaze and reach of Ofsted is far-reaching. With Ofsted reports publically available, institutional finances, student numbers and reputation are intimately tied up with being judged in favourable terms by Ofsted. Comparisons can be made between colleges and their relative Ofsted ratings, thereby ensuring they have “a lot to lose and a great deal to gain from being seen to ‘succeed’” (Maguire et al., 2011, p.4). As expressed by Sugrue and Mertkan (2017), Ofsted is a particular accountability that cannot be ignored; the imperative to ‘deliver’ on it results in a constant pressure that is ever-present in the minds of teachers. Used as a metric for efficient and effective teaching performance, Ofsted reached into the daily lives of teachers beyond set inspection visits. Indeed, Gleeson et al. (2015) claim that since Ofsted has had

responsibility for inspecting FE provision, its role has changed from “inspecting standards to one of defining them” (p.83).

On-going use of Ofsted observation criteria and grading acted as a tool to monitor and track teachers and their classroom performances at Shireland College. Using the Grades 1 (outstanding) to 4 (inadequate) scale for observing lessons, Gleeson et al. (ibid.) argue that teachers performed to “comply with prescribed notions of “good” or “outstanding” practice, notions that are largely determined though not explicitly defined by Ofsted”.[2]

As contended by Jeffrey and Woods (1998), “although the Ofsted team are seen once and rarely again, the discourse of inspection and accountability remains” (p.106). Troman (1997) supported this with his view of inspectors being “the absent presence” (p.349), resulting in teachers remaining in constant inspection mode. Anxious to avoid the gaze and censure of management, teachers ensured their pedagogic practices would meet inspectorial approval (Earley, 1998) by self-regulating their behaviour “even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed” (Foucault, 1977, p.206). By developing a ‘mindset of appeasement’ (Sugrue and Mertkan, 2017) against the threat of losing face, losing confidence or losing their job for ‘poor performance’ (O’Leary and Brooks, 2014), the shadow cast by Ofsted defined and limited pedagogic practice horizons. As a result, teachers enacted homogeneous practices suffused with ‘artificiality’, as such, an orthodox (Cockburn, 2005) “set piece[s]” using proven formulas and “contrived practice” as a means of securing a ‘good result’ (O’Leary and Brooks, 2014, p.543).

The meta-practice of Ofsted and the inspection regime resulted in stressed teachers’ ‘game playing’ and fabricating pedagogic performances to comply with normalised

[2] Data collected March 2014 prior to announcement May 2015 that graded lesson observations would no longer be used in Ofsted inspections for FE colleges from September 2015 (Morrison, 2015)

notions of approved pedagogic practice (Burnell, 2017; Perryman, 2009). In order to evidence accountability (Ball, 2001) the omnipresent gaze of Ofsted reduced teachers to "window dressing" lessons (De Wolf and Janssens, 2007, p.382) and enacting inauthentic performances whereby "'box ticking' and 'jumping through hoops'" (O'Leary and Wood, 2017, p.582) to be 'seen' to be 'good' was favoured over more truthful and authentic practices. By "teaching to a strict recipe" (Perryman, 2009, p.612) teachers expressed and played out the accepted and expected behaviours required by Ofsted (and by association, the college management). Repetition and consistent performing led to a stylised approach being engrained and enacted automatically, irrespective of academic level, i.e. across FE and HE. The fear of getting a Grade 3 or 4 led teachers to resist opportunities to experiment pedagogically (Gleeson et al., 2015). Instead they complied with "state-regulated wisdom about what constitutes excellent practice [and] to avoid the risk-taking attendant upon innovation" (O'Leary and Brooks, 2014, p.539).

Having discussed how the meta-practices of performativity and accountability and how Ofsted contribute to HE teachers enacting risk-averse pedagogic practices, it is pertinent now to briefly remind how they came into existence within education.

8.11.4 Origins of meta-practices and HE teacher risk aversion – New Public Management (NPM)

As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.1.3) neoliberal regimes of performativity and accountability are widespread and deeply embedded within FECs. Following the passing of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, colleges were removed from Local Education Authority (LEA) control through Incorporation. Since then FECs have been operating within a quasi-market within a regime of "choice, competition, effectiveness, efficiency, performance management, accountability and risk" (Sugrue and Mertkan, 2017, p.176). Operating within a regime of New Public Management

(NPM) (Creasey, 2013) the imperative for colleges to train students for the workplace in order to maintain economic productivity has served to function as a further meta-practice. The NPM meta-practice compels teachers to be aware of individual accountability and performance. The climate of consumer feedback and complaint (Avis, 1996; Bailey, 2014), and students being viewed as consumers and "potential income generation units and as customers to be satisfied" (Naidoo and Jamieson, 2005, p.274), further contribute to teachers enacting risk averse pedagogic practices.

Simply, the pervasive national neoliberal performativity and accountability cultures found within education at all levels can powerfully shape pedagogic practices by prefiguring pedagogic risk aversion. Functioning as meta-practices, government mandated educational policies and strategies (including Ofsted) inform and sustain performativity and accountability discourses. Coupled with economic imperatives to ensure financially viability, colleges compete for students and, crucially, to retain them in order to gain their funding and to have 'good' achievement data to present to their stakeholders. Given the persuasive force of these imperatives, it is not unsurprising that teachers might adopt safe 'Ofsted-approved' practices to maximize the number of students completing and to minimise the chances of the student 'customer' complaining about the product and services they paid for.

At this juncture it is evident that risk-averse individual teacher HE practices were influenced by both local practices and policies at the site, and by those external to it. Further, these practices and policies form part of a wider national (and arguably global) neoliberal economic landscape where managerialist ideals prevail. However, as mentioned earlier within this chapter, the theory of PA does not fully account for the theme of pedagogic risk aversion. The final element concerns that of prior knowledge of students and of teacher expectation of HE students at Shireland College. In order to consider and account for this theoretically I have drawn on

alternative theories to integrate my findings fully, thereby ensuring all facets of the risk-aversion theme.

8.11.5 Beyond Practice Architectures to theoretically account for pedagogic risk aversion

Animal, equine and veterinary nursing undergraduate programmes are almost exclusively taught within FE LBCs via a partner university validation agreement (Rapley, 2014). Similarly, Level 3 animal, equine and veterinary nursing qualifications are typically situated within FE LBCs, with many Level 3 FE students remaining with the same institution as they make the transition from FE to HE. It is this particular internal progression characteristic, which can contribute to HE teachers adopting risk-averse pedagogic practices. A combination of personal student knowledge and teacher expectation of FE students who had completed Level 3 programmes in a LBC contributed to teachers' enacting pragmatic and protectionist pedagogic practices.

Burnard and White (2008) claim "the beliefs, values and attitudes towards students, colleagues and community members as well as classroom strategies and processes all contribute to our conception of pedagogy" (p.669). As part of this complex picture, I focus my attention upon notions of teacher expectations and its potential for impacting upon classroom interactions. Boehlert (2005) asserts that teachers do have "expectations, predictions, or preconceived notions" (p.491) about their students and their abilities. These preconceptions and expectations can create something of a "self-fulfilling prophecy" whereby teachers with low expectations of their students can end up with low achieving students (Tsiplakides and Keramida, 2010, p.22).

Notions of prior student knowledge and teacher expectation are particularly relevant to situations where students progress from FE to HE from within the same institution. Having spent two or three years in FE, students will have become accustomed to particular ways of being taught and assessed, and often demand and/or are seemingly considered to need to continue with the pedagogic practice regime and learning formats they are familiar with when they move into HE (Lygo-Baker, 2017; Ecclestone, 2007). Part of this familiarity can include a 'second chance' culture where referrals and re-submissions of assessments is typically permitted (Poon Scott, 2011). Further, King and Widdowson (2012) suggest that HE in FE students prefer practical over theory classes, and often need more supportive approaches, a scenario Ecclestone (2012) suggests as being an FE styled 'comfort zone HE'.

Ecclestone (2007) further claims that given the number of FE teachers who themselves have an FE student background, there can be a tendency for them to teach in ways in which they were taught, and to teach in an overly protecting and empathetic way. These concerns are exacerbated when HE teachers are personally acquainted with students whom they have previously encountered at FE level. By knowing students and their relative academic abilities, attitudes and personalities, teachers' expectations can be influenced still further. This view is supported by Salisbury et al. (2009) who suggest that by knowing their students well, teachers in FECs can develop "routinised teacher expectations" (p.433). As such, a teacher with previous experience of a student will not begin a new HE relationships unladen. Rather, they will come with 'baggage'. Therefore, by virtue of their FE progresser status and their FE experiences, particular teacher expectations can result.

Prior knowledge can foreshadow teachers' practices and contribute to the enactment of risk-averse pedagogic practices. With reference to Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson's *Pygmalion in the Classroom,* I illustrate the presence and potential of

teacher expectations, and its potential to foreshadow pedagogic practice. Central to their work concerning teacher expectation, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) argue that teacher expectation is related to notions of probability of educational success, and contend that teacher expectation is implicated in student performance. Termed the *Pygmalion Effect*, it revolves around the premise that the higher the levels of teacher expectation, the higher the levels of student performance. In contrast, the *Golem Effect* is the opposite, whereby low teacher expectation can result in poor student performance (Reynolds, 2007). The Golem Effect is a useful vehicle for illustrating how teacher expectation can feature within pedagogic practice choice making. I do not use it as a means to suggest HE students at Shireland College received any negative treatment or prejudice as a result of low teacher expectations. On the contrary, the potential of the Golem Effect was not realised. Teachers' low expectations of HE students did not result in them passively accepting any perceived deficiencies and allowing students to 'meet their fate'. Rather, because of their cognisance of perceived challenges students faced with mathematics and science, and a preference for practical over academic, HE teachers employed self-protectionist, risk-averse teaching approaches to mitigate against lower expectations. Working within a regime of performativity, where teachers are "judged by the results of their students" (Bailey, 2014 p.668), the preferred pedagogic strategy revolved around attainable, 'safe goals' and prioritising essential knowledge required for assessments (Ecclestone, 2012). Given the potential for negative consequences should students not perform well, observing the aphorism of the "assessment tail wagging the curriculum dog" (O'Leary and Brooks, 2014, p.532) served to lessen the high-risk nature of assessments (Stobart and Eggen, 2012).

In addition to teacher expectations of their HE students, the student complaint culture also contributed towards teachers enacting risk-averse pedagogic practices. Naidoo and Jamieson (2005) contend that teachers are subject to "the constant threat of

student litigation and complaints" (p.275), whilst Feather (2016a) suggests FE lecturers work within a culture of blame where there is "fear of student reprisals for not gaining the grade they were expecting" (p.109). As a result of knowing students and of knowing that any complaints would be considered as being indicative of individual or team failure, teachers adopted practices which propagated intellectual passivity and focused upon "the 'reward' of a particular grade or qualification" (Williams, 2012, p.95). Williams (ibid.) further argued how risk taking was disincentivised by teachers fearing that lessons containing challenging topics would result in student poor feedback and evaluation scores.

Biesta (2004) remarked how:

> teachers and educational institutions have been manoeuvred into a position in which they have to go along with the customer and meet the customer's needs. As a result it has become increasingly difficult for them to act according to their professional judgment if it runs counter to the apparent needs of the learner. (p.249)

Working within a results-driven and customer-service orientated climate where students are 'paying customers' does not facilitate pedagogic risk taking. Students' and teachers' futures increasingly depend upon the qualifications gained; it is the ultimate metric. Therefore, teachers resort to enacting homogenous low-risk, assessment focused pedagogic practices to enable both them and their students to achieve success and, crucially, for their successes to be 'seen'.

8.12 Chapter summary

What this discussion illustrates is the complexity of pedagogy and of the resultant classroom encounters and enactments (Sjølie, 2017). I have drawn upon a diverse range of existing literature and situated them within a loose PT frame in order to discuss the three theoretical themes of surveillance and control, identity and agency and risk aversion. As part of this I have discussed how the themes relate to the

specific conditions, i.e. the practice architectures within the site of Shireland College, and how the HE pedagogic practices that unfold within the practice architectures are connected to the three themes, to the site, and beyond the site. With reference to the site I paid specific attention to how the sociomaterial and physical aspects contribute to the ways in which HE pedagogic practices are enacted. I have also related the three themes to the contextualising/sensitising literature review from Chapter 2. What this has demonstrated is that there is broad agreement with the exisiting literature regarding the surveillance culture and the impact of Ofsted upon the ways in which HE in FE teachers enacted their HE pedagogic practices. Similarly, the risk averse pedagogies were broadly in concert with the instrumental, teacher centered practices reported in the literature. What this study has demonstrated is the complexity of how HE teachers develop an HE teacher identity, and how the absence of HE artefacts and HE discourse within Shireland College, and their relative isolation from the wider HE community create significant barriers for HE in FE teachers to develop themselves as HE teachers.

By exploring 'practice' rather than just individuals, I contend how the more implicit and unspoken aspects of practice and their underlying rationales have been unearthed and more deeply explored, a process which has generated new insights and understandings of teacher practice enactment. Further, I suggest that the complexity of pedagogic practice enactment is a combination of people, place and material 'things' within a site, which is further influenced by internal and external educational, financial and political policies and regulation. What can be said, what can done, and how people relate to each other within the site of Shireland College results in an elaborate nexus of internal and external contributory factors; factors which prefigure HE practice enactments and result in HE practices being risk-averse, teacher-centered, transmissive and instrumental.

Having discussed all of the themes, I will conclude the chapter with the presentation of the final substantive grounded theory entitled '*Taking the path of least resistance. A Constructivist Grounded Theory of HE teacher practice enactments at a landbased college'*. Presented as a "theoretical interpretation or explanation of a delimited problem in a particular area" (Charmaz, 2006, p.189), it illustrates how the three theoretical themes relate to each other, and how they theoretically account for HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College.

8.12.1 The substantive constructivist grounded theory – "Taking the path of least resistance"

The interpretive analysis of the empirical data resulted in three core theoretical themes. Taken together these themes provide a theoretical account, a CGT of HE teacher practice enactment at Shireland College. By integrating empirical data grounded in the research site with existing theory, the constructivist grounded theory – "*Taking the path of least resistance*" – is a substantive theory which best accounts for the 'how', the 'what' and the 'why' of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College (Figure 10). This CGT proposes that HE teachers were confronted with a number of barriers, which constrained their ability to enact authentic and challenging HE pedagogic practices. Such was the nature and number of constraints, the teachers resorted to adopting protectionist and appeasing HE pedagogic practices as a means of minimising management censure and student complaint. As the name suggests they took the path of least resistance as a means of surviving within a highly control and highly surveilled, low trust environment that was strongly influenced by a discourse of performativity and accountability.

The ingrained and taken-for-granted FE pedagogic culture and practices at Shireland College, along with the constant surveillance and complaints regime, restricted teacher agency and confidence of the HE teachers and their ability to develop a

professional HE identity. In turn, this restriction, particularly when coupled with the teachers being early career, novice HE teachers without advanced subject or HE pedagogic knowledge and expertise, resulted in observable pedagogic practice enactments which were risk averse and lacking in aspects of criticality and depth associated with HE learning and teaching. A further element concerning HE learners with low levels of academic confidence and the complaints culture further contributed to the enactment these pedagogic practices.

Each of the three themes relates to each other and coalesces around wider themes (meta-practices) of performativity and accountability and Ofsted. Consequentially, these all serve as significant and arguably, influential and omnipresent landmarks within the broader educational landscape within which Shireland College is situated.

Figure 10. CGT "Taking the path of least resistance"

To illustrate some brief examples of the relatedness of the three themes, surveillance and control relate to risk aversion as a result of the VLE and classroom spot checks, the regular teaching observations and the use and recording of graded Ofsted observations throughout the academic year. Risk aversion relates to identity and agency as a result of HE teachers not receiving HE-specific teacher training or CPD, the absence of experienced HE colleagues at Shireland College to 'stir them in' to HE practices, and their exclusion from the partner university and wider HE academic community. Finally, identity and agency relate to surveillance and control through teacher self-regulation and normalisation in order to conform with taken-for-granted and sanctioned Ofsted-approved pedagogic 'norms'. Exacerbated by their novice status, teachers were anxious to fit in and to 'look right', an attitude which was at odds with developing a more autonomous HE teacher identity. Played out against a backdrop of performativity and accountability (in which Ofsted is included), the themes connect to this backdrop and each other, ultimately serving to leave HE teachers with little choice but to enact conformist Ofsted approved pedagogic practices. These practices were teachered-centered, transmissive and instrumental.

"*Taking the path of least resistance*" also encompasses the practice landscape in which Shireland College is situated. Foreshadowed by notions of the site (Schatzki, 2001), the place and the human and non-human 'things' within it have the capability to prefigure practice and to sanction and legitimise particular sayings, doings and relatings. Considering the site in concert with the three themes, this substantive CGT accounts for the 'how', the 'what' and the 'why' of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College.

8.13 Conclusion

This discussion chapter has integrated the themes with relevant existing literature in order to construct a substantive CGT. This CGT provides answers to my research

question and theoretically accounts for HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College. Having fully explicated the substantive CGT, the final conclusion, implications and recommendations chapter follows.

Chapter 9: Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The conclusion and recommendations chapter brings this study to a close by reflecting upon the research question and key findings, and suggesting future research directions. Within this I articulate how this study has made an original contribution to the body of knowledge for both HE in FE and for landbased education. An important facet of this includes how I have met the criteria for judging the quality of a CGT. Finally, I discuss limitations of the study as well as implications of the study and recommendations for further research. Additional recommendations for college managers to consider with regard better supporting to their HE in FE provision are also included.

9.2 Key findings and addressing the research question

This research set out to explore HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments within a single FE landbased college. Importantly, it sought to explore it in order to theorise an under-researched and under-theorised area of HE. The rationale for the study was initially driven by a 'hunch' about the potential role of an FE setting to influence HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment, a 'hunch' originating from my own professional experience of both HE in FE and landbased education.

Following my turn to interpretivism and sensitivity to PT, I adopted a CGT approach as a means of enabling HE teacher pedagogic practice enactments at Shireland College to be theorised. Using rounds of iterative GT coding and memoing, careful interpretation of data collected from the research site and subsequent integration with existing theory, I am satisfied that this study has addressed the research question: *When teaching HE at Shireland College, what do these HE in FE teachers do, how do they do it, and why?* In so doing, this study contributes to the pauce

literature corpus and to the gap in the literature concerning HE in FE teacher pedagogic practice.

The substantive CGT – "*Taking the path of least resistance*" – has illuminated the complexity of factors implicated in the 'what', 'how' and 'why' of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College. These factors can be traced back to origins within the individual teachers themselves and, to an extent, to the nature of the broad subject area of equine/animal/veterinary nursing studies, and to the HE students at the college. The biographies of the teachers, i.e. themselves coming from HE in FE, vocational backgrounds and being novice teachers did compound the issue, and did serve to prefigure their pedagogic practice to be more aligned to those typically characterised within the FE pedagogy literature. Their strong allegiance to their vocational occupation created a situation whereby practical skills acquisition did, at times, privilege more theoretical aspects (Jephcote and Salisbury, 2009; Salisbury et al., 2009; Robson et al., 2004). Given the prerequisite of FE vocational teachers to teach on vocationally orientated training programmes, it is perhaps inevitable that they used their occupational knowledge and experience to apply it to, and to shape their pedagogic practices for FE and for HE (Loo, 2014).

This was amplified by equine/animal/veterinary nursing studies being relatively 'young' as an emerging subject to study at HE level. Whilst the area is developing (particularly in veterinary nursing), it is in transition and continues to operate largely without a scientific evidence base upon which to inform the HE curricula. The relatively weak disciplinary foundations did contribute to pedagogic practices that relied upon transmission of practical skills and knowledge via modelling. Gamble (2013) suggests that if vocational teachers only understand their subject "in general procedural terms, they teach procedurally" (p.229). She argues that only when

vocational teachers can draw upon an evidence base and “disciplinary antecedents” can they move away from transmission and instrumentality (ibid.).

A further contributing factor concerned the relative inexperience of the teachers, and their status as being novice HE teachers. Being novices created a situation whereby the teachers were conformist and tended towards rule following. Operating in ‘survival mode’, they were more susceptible to the management directives and constraints placed upon them within the college site, and lacked the confidence and experience to question or challenge the rules imposed upon them (Katz, 1995; Berliner, 1994; Huberman, 1989; Berliner, 1998).

The HE students at Shireland College also contributed to the particular ways in which HE pedagogy was enacted. The majority of HE students were internal progressers from FE at Shireland College. This created a situation where the teachers already had personal knowledge of them and, in some cases, had negatively orientated preconceived ideas regarding their potential capabilities as HE students. The highly sedimented and taken-for-granted teaching and learning culture at the college was not restricted to the teachers. As FE students, the HE progressers would have had two to three years’ experience of being at the college and did enter HE with their own preconceived notions of expectations and what teaching would be like.

The ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of HE teacher pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College can also be traced back to the FE site itself and to the broader political, economic and social landscape in which Shireland College is situated. Whilst the practice architectures and sanctioned sayings, doings and relatings, and wider meta-practices of performativity and accountability and inspection served to prefigure and constrain HE teachers, the physical site and attendant non-human artefacts did compound the situation. The pauce literature corpus reported that teaching HE in an FEC was challenging (Young, 2002; Harwood and Harwood, 2004; Feather, 2014).

Whilst it was inferred the FE context might influence HE pedagogy (Burkhill et al., 2008), no convincing link was established by virtue of little compelling evidence being presented. However, the findings of my research suggest that my initial 'hunch' about the FE site (including its attendant artefacts and symbols) having the potential to influence HE practice appears to have been borne out. The CGT does theoretically account for HE pedagogic practice being influenced and constrained by the FE college as a 'site' (Schatzki, 2001).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the broad neoliberal and FE policy landscape evident across UK FECs also applies to Shireland College. The college does not operate in a vacuum, nor is it insulated from the wider, marketised environment in which it is situated. Like other FECs, the close monitoring and control of the teachers via observations and the background culture of surveillance at the college resulted in them being unable to construct authentic and meaningful HE teacher identities, nor to achieve agency with regard to their HE work. This led to teachers adopting risk-averse, instrumental pedagogic practices in order to 'survive'. Conscious of the notion of consequences should they be seen to fail to comply with sanctioned sayings, doings and relatings in the college, and consequences of poor student achievement, teachers adopted instrumental, assessment-driven pedagogic practices to stave off complaint or censure. Whilst this pedagogy disquieted the HE teachers, it was enacted consciously. As discussed, teachers did engage in "strategic compliance" (Edgington, 2017, p.84) and 'gaming' behaviours (Fletcher, 2015). In addition to the concern regarding complaint or censure, the HE pedagogic practices were also enacted in that way in response to the "'all-seeing' eye for 'standards and 'quality'" (Gleeson et al., 2015, p.83) which Ofsted presented. The HE pedagogic practices enacted by HE in FE teachers at Shireland College broadly corresponded with the instrumental pedagogies associated with FE as described. In accord with the literature (see *inter alia* O'Leary, 2014; Gleeson et al,. 2015), the

influence of Ofsted upon how teachers enacted their HE pedagogic practices was evident. The taken–for-granted, Ofsted-approved approach to teaching was deeply engrained at the site and within the HE teachers. The extent to which there was differentiation between FE and HE pedagogic practices was limited. The surveillance culture precipitated HE teachers enacting Ofsted approved approaches for fear of reprimand should a spot check observation take place. Further, the pedagogic practices were also strongly aligned towards developing industry standard practical skills acquisition that, at times was lacking the 'really useful knowledge' (Avis, 2002) essential for vocational subjects.

9.3 Meeting quality criteria for a CGT

As discussed in the Methodology chapter (sub-section 6.2.4), I paid attention to guidance from both Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Charmaz (2014) in order to ensure quality and rigour in this study. With regard to Guba and Lincoln (1994), I propose I have met their criteria in the following ways:

- Credibility via prolonged engagement in the site and on-going observation
- Transferability via purposive sampling and the use of thick description
- Dependability via multiple data collection methods
- Confirmability via maintaining a reflexive stance and an audit trail.

In order to meet the quality criteria of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness proposed by Charmaz (2014) I contend that I have achieved this in the following ways:

- Credibility by virtue of having extensive knowledge and experience of both landbased education and of HE in FE more broadly. By sustained engagement in the research site I was able to gather sufficient empirical, grounded data from which my substantive CGT and conclusions were

constructed. The inclusion of memos, examples of codes and coding and transcript excerpts further serve to assure credibility. By integrating existing theory with my interpretative analysis, strong links between the data and the subsequent theoretical account have been made.

- Originality as a result of the new theoretical insights this study has produced. Neither previous landbased nor HE in FE literature has encompassed all of the theoretical themes contained within this CGT. The CGT supports some existing literature, and adds to the corpus of knowledge with new theorisations of practice.
- Resonance by the inclusion of participants who are best placed to inform the particular study. Further, by the use of multiple in-depth participant interviews and discussions to present the fullness of their experience, by the significant inclusion of participant narratives, and by sharing my evolving interpretative analysis with them. As such, what emerged from the study made sense to them. Arguably, to a greater or lesser extent, the study would likely have resonance with others in similar contexts.
- Usefulness is considered by virtue of the relative importance of HE in FE as a sub-sector of UK HE. Given the number of HE in FE students and teachers in the UK, the findings could be used to inform future pedagogic policy and teacher training/CPD directions. The methodology and findings from the CGT could be re-focused to explore and theorise other educational contexts.

9.4 Generalisability of the research findings

Given that this is an interpretivist study seeking to explore and theorise the particularity of pedagogic practice within a specific site, positivist notions of objectivity, replicability and generalisability are not applicable. The study was conducted in a small, culturally specific college, so the substantive CGT constructed from it needs to be understood with this in mind.

The study was not designed to generate and test a hypothesis, nor to predict or explain causal relationships (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). Rather, it sought to conduct a detailed exploration of the HE pedagogic practices of the particular participants in a particular site from within the interpretivist paradigm. As such, the CGT is the result of a co-construction between my participants and myself, and I do not make claims that my findings have total universality across landbased / more general HE in FE college contexts. That said, I do contend that some of the patterns and themes from participant narratives, coupled with the characteristics of Shireland College (in terms of Ofsted, student and teacher demographics and numbers, staffing models, mixed FE and HE provision, vocational curricula etc.) may have broad commonality with other similarly constituted LBCs. Further, given how the literature is replete with reports of managerialist surveillance cultures in FECs, it is not unreasonable to posit that what this study has revealed about the impact of this pervading culture upon HE pedagogic practices, would resonate (to a greater or lesser extent) with other FECs with HE provision. The apparent ubiquity of managerialist surveillance cultures in FE does add to the potential for making some generalisations about its impact beyond this particular research site. Similarly, whilst generalist FECs with HE provision are inevitably diverse in terms of their provision, there are arguably some shared characteristics, i.e. typically vocational HE via foundation degrees and catering for non-traditional students in a culture of WP, which might arguably provide sufficient grounds for some level of generalisability to be tentatively proposed.

9.5 Further claims for originality and strengths of the study

In addition to earlier originality claims I propose that the study can make further claims on a number of fronts: subject originality; theoretical originality; and methodological originality.

9.5.1 Subject originality

For subject I refer to both landbased education and to HE in FE as being subjects of the study. Following an extensive review of landbased education literature I propose that this is the first doctoral study to focus specifically upon landbased HE in general, and landbased HE pedagogy, specifically. I further propose that this is the first doctoral study to adopt a CGT approach to studying any facet of landbased education or of HE in FE teacher pedagogic practices.

9.5.2 Theoretical originality

I suggest that this study is theoretically original by virtue of synthesising three theoretical traditions; sociomaterialism, practice theory and constructivist grounded theory, in order to study HE in FE teacher pedagogic practice enactments. Whilst teacher pedagogy literature is often situated on one side of the structure versus agency divide, the anti-dualist, site-specific and social-materially sensitive positioning of this study dissolves this binary. By considering Shireland College as a site (as characterised by Schatzki and his site ontology), the particularity of the site and the actors and non-human artefacts within it have arguably been subject to more nuanced scrutiny than a traditional teacher practice study might provide. The particular lens of practice theory takes into account both the fine-grained, context-specific particularity of the site and the actors within it, as well as the external environment within which it is situated. PT helps to reveal the impacts of the external environment and the extent to which it enables or constrains practice within a particular site. The effects of the external environment and policies will be felt more or less and differently according to the particularities of any individual site, the practice architectures and the actors within it. Therefore, whilst external influences undoubtedly play a part in how practices are conceived and enacted within a site, they need to be recognised in concert with the site particularities. It is this combination of external, more generic with the very fine-grained specifics of the site

that gives PT its power and utility as a way of exploring teacher practices. By decentering the human and exploring them within the context of non-human materials and 'things' and their relationship to human practice enactment, I propose this theoretical framing offers a more holistic and arguably richer view of teacher pedagogic practice and a more informed and nuanced position from which to theorise it.

9.5.3 Methodological originality

I propose methodological originality by virtue of adopting a CGT approach and articulating it with notions of practice as espoused by Schatzki's site ontology and Kemmis and Grootenboer's theory of Practice Architectures. I claim further originality because of the inclusion of multiple classroom observations and sustained engagement in the research site. Following a review of the HE in FE literature (Chapter 2), the few HE in FE pedagogy studies I found relied upon questionnaires and/or interviews, and I was unable to locate any studies which included multiple observations as part of the methodology. Similarly, no HE in FE pedagogy/ landbased empirical studies included an extended period of time in the field at the research site.

Given these factors I propose that the qualitative research design is a strength of the study. The decision to use a CGT sensitised with broad notions of practice has enabled me to construct a theoretical account, which is resonant and useful.

9.6 Limitations of the study

Arguably, all doctoral research studies are subject to limitations, and this study was no exception. Given that CGT is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, any theoretical accounts are always going to be constructed as a result of the data having been interpreted by a particular researcher. As such, with the same data another researcher could potentially arrive at different theoretical conclusions.

Further, by virtue of being a single case any claims for generalisability beyond the research site are arguably limited.

Notable limitations are acknowledged as being those regarding sample size, novice CGT researcher status, form of CGT used, deductive disclosure and researcher bias. Six teacher participants were used within the study. Whilst not a direct objective for a CGT, the generalisability of findings is likely to be limited as a result of the small sample used. More importantly, the sample size potentially limits the richness of the substantive CGT that was constructed. More participants might have resulted in new insights. Despite this I maintain that the sample size still afforded me the opportunity to achieve "theoretical sufficiency" (Dey, 1999, p.25) by virtue of detailed and multiple interviews, the sustained engagement in the research site, the purposively selected teacher participants, and my own theoretical sensitivity to landbased education and to HE in FE more broadly.

As a first time CGT researcher I was not able to plan or carry out the study from a position of previous experience. This could have resulted in methodological and/or analytical errors being made. However, I maintain that my lack of experience meant I paid careful attention to guidance and to remaining focused on data grounded in the research site. Further, my lack of experience meant I was not tempted to take short cuts or take liberties with the data or my subsequent interpretations of it. Whilst arguably more time-consuming than for someone with greater experience, I was painstaking in my approach and am satisfied that my lack of experience did not overtly limit the quality of the data collected or my subsequent analysis of it.

Whilst adopting a CGT for this study is arguably a strength, a perceived weakness results from using an abbreviated version. As described in the methodology chapter, all eligible participants took part in the study. This resulted in no additional eligible participants being able to be theoretically sampled following the first round of

interviews and observations. Instead this was done with the same participant group. To compensate for any lack of breadth I followed the recommendation of Willig (2008) to use line-by-line coding to achieve as much analytic depth as possible. Whilst it would have been preferable to have had new participants to theoretically sample I maintain that my engagement in the field, my use of observations, my own reflexivity, my use of peer de-briefing and my inclusion of negative cases mitigate against this potential limitation.

One of the benefits of a qualitative study is the ability to privilege participant narratives and experiences. By using thick descriptions of people and places, and by painting pen portraits of participants, qualitative studies can render people and places in rich, multi-dimensional ways. For this study, concerns over deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009) meant people and places could only be referred to in often the most rudimentary of ways, thereby perhaps diminishing the impacts of some of the participant narratives and descriptions of the site.

Finally, the concern of researcher bias can be perceived as being a significant limitation of qualitative, single researcher studies. However, by making clear my own position and worldview and by adopting a reflexive stance I am confident that I was able to negotiate bias during the design, field work and write up stages. By on-going use of my research journal I created an audit trail of my reflexive thinking (Shepherd, 2006). From the reflexive position of a constructivist grounded theorist, I also used the constant comparative method and memo writing (Ramalho et al., 2015) (Appendix 6). When interviewing participants I took care not to overly dictate the direction of the questioning. Using my theoretical sensitivity as “points of departure” (Charmaz, 2003, p.259) for asking initial questions, I subsequently made every effort to follow the participants and for the direction to follow that of themes arising from the data and the discussions. Finally I offered transcripts for participants to see and

talked through key points from interviews and observations in order that they were happy that they best accounted for our discussions. By doing so participants were involved in the on-going co-construction of knowledge and understanding.

9.7 Implications of the study

This study is acknowledged as being a small study exploring only one small site with a small sample size in a particular subject area of HE in FE. Therefore, the caveat that any recommendations proposed should be treated cautiously must be borne in mind.

What this study has illustrated is the conceptual complexity of HE teacher practice enactments, and how the broad cultural landscape of neoliberalism and managerialism in FE, in concert with the particularities of the teachers themselves, the HE in FE learners and the animal/equine/veterinary nursing subjects, create a challenging environment in which to operate and teach HE. The unique combination of the site and the people within it contributed to a broadly accepted and similarly constituted approach to HE pedagogic practice enactment at Shireland College. Given the widespread culture of surveillance and taken-for-granted acceptance of Ofsted as being the benchmark for 'good teaching', it is perhaps not unsurprising that the HE pedagogic practices were aligned more to those of instrumentalism as characterised by the FE literature.

The study has also elucidated the challenges faced and tensions experienced by HE teachers working in an FEC. Facing a surfeit of demands from management and students, and from wider educational policy and political imperatives, these teachers were often in invidious positions. Whilst aspiring to give their HE learners a challenging and rigorous educational experience, the actuality of events was often quite different. Compelled to conform to tightly controlled and sanctioned ways of teaching and working, they unwillingly accepted that their lack of agency and

experience rendered them unable to effect change within the site, leaving them to enact practices that they did not always consider to be appropriate for HE.

This often included teaching HE subjects which were beyond their area of subject expertise. This contributed to their overall lack of confidence as HE teachers, and to the enactment of restricted pedagogies. This resulted in pedagogies that were aligned to assessments and those that were often lacking in challenge (Childs and McNicholl, 2007). This also included teachers not having an HE-specific teacher training/education to enable them to confidently develop a repertoire of HE pedagogic practices to enact within their HE classes. Arguably, such practices were not necessarily consistent with the QAA (2014b), who suggest that those teaching HE are "knowledgeable and well qualified and trained" (p.2) in order that students can "study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking" (p.24). The QAA (2012) further recommends that students should become "active and independent learners" (p.6) and learn about "interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflection, not just on repetition of facts" (p.12).

The sensitivity to practice within this study has enabled the situation of the HE teachers to be revealed, arguably in greater detail and clarity than more conventional methodological approaches might have achieved. The anti-dualist approach has highlighted that without changes at meta-practice and site level, HE teachers on the ground are unlikely to be able to establish and sustain new practices which could be less instrumental and more aligned towards more challenging and empowering, critical pedagogies. Shireland College (and arguably other similarly constituted ones) could make some small-scale changes by taking away a few hours of teaching, giving a few hours a week remission for scholarly activity, or supporting HEA Fellowship applications, but the net result is likely to remain unchanged. Without

attending to the practice architectures at the site and challenging the sanctioned and accepted sayings, doings and relatings, individuals alone are unable to effect change and sustain new practices. Both people and the place (including non-human material artefacts) need to be explored and changed for new practices to become established and sustained.

The meta-practices of a target-driven neoliberal, performativity culture form the landscape in which the college is operating, and without radical political changes look set to continue. As such, this is beyond the scope of individual teachers or the college to change. However, what *can* change are the practice architectures at the college. Arguably, their degree of sedimentation towards FE and the lack of recognition of HE serve only to constrain, rather than enable HE teachers in their endeavour to enact challenging HE pedagogic practices.

In terms of the implications of this study, I suggest that questions about the potential for dissonance when small, FE-dominated colleges elect to run HE programmes need to be revisited. This dissonance is arguably exacerbated when sizable numbers of students on HE programmes have internally progressed from the same FE college after two or even three years of study. As discussed in Chapter 2 the QAA (2016) 2014/15 HER review reported a link between colleges with fewer than 250 HE students being more likely to receive an unsatisfactory judgement. That said, I restate that this small-scale study cannot and does not make universal judgments or claims regarding the suitability of such institutions to effectively offer HE. Rather, I raise it as an area for further and more widespread research and discussion in the HE in FE sector.

HE in FE is a small but important provider in the UK HE market. Its broad remit to include non-traditional students, to service HE 'cold spots' and to typically provide specialist, vocational HE serves an important function. The findings from this study

do resonate with some earlier findings in the literature about the challenges associated with HE in FE (see inter alia Burkhill et al., 2008; Turner et al., 2009; Feather, 2012; Feather, 2014). Most recently, there have been moves to recognise the importance of ensuring a more scholarly approach in HE in FE through initiatives to promote SoTL. Exemplified by the AoC Scholarship project, this is only one project (albeit significant with around 45 UK FECs taking part) within a pauce literature corpus. However, as more colleges seek to gain FDAP, more colleges will be required to meet the demands of the QAA (2013) to ensure that "all teaching staff engaged in the delivery of higher education programmes [to] have relevant knowledge and understanding of current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge and understanding directly inform and enhance their teaching" (p.2). FECs will have to demonstrate this before they can be granted FDAP. Therefore it is not unreasonable to suggest (and indeed hope) that this policy imperative will compel more FECs to seek to adopt more scholarly HE practices and to create more 'HEness' within their sites (Lea and Simmons, 2012). Whilst the AoC Scholarship project is undoubtedly welcomed, I have concerns as to the extent to which it considers the need for colleges as places, as 'sites' to be explored along with the people within it. From a perspective sensitive to PT, if attempts are made to develop people without duly considering and developing the site where their practices are enacted, the ability for new practice niches to be opened up in order for new practices to 'catch on' (Wilkinson et al., 2013) is arguably impeded. Without looking at the sayings, doings and relatings of individuals *and* the social dimensions of the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of which practice architectures comprise, it is questionable to what extent appropriate intersubjective spaces might open up to allow new HE practices to be enacted. This is further compounded by the presence of material, non-human artefacts and physical spaces that are strongly associated with FE. This study has indicated that they do appear to influence HE pedagogic practice. As such, small

colleges with little or no dedicated HE spaces, and few HE artefacts may well find establishing HE practices and HEness more of a challenge. Without attending to these aspects, teacher practice is likely remain in a mode of reproduction rather than of transformation (Kemmis, 2014), and arguably along the lines of instrumentalism rather than of practices more aligned to challenging and empowering critical pedagogies.

9.8 Recommendations

In the light of the findings from this study, coupled with the limited evidence base concerning HE in FE teacher pedagogic practices, recommendations are specifically directed to college HE leaders and managers. As part of this, these are extended to universities who validate college HE provision.

Given the scale of this study and the limited claims that can be made for generalisability beyond Shireland College, I recommend that further studies are conducted to explore HE in FE teacher pedagogic practice. With 10 per cent of HE being taught by this group of HE in FE teachers it is remarkable that there is not more literature concerning pedagogy for this particular group.

Studies adopting a methodological approach, which considers teachers, learners and the sites in which they are enacting practice, are recommended. Such studies would ideally have larger sample sizes, and a more comprehensive coverage of HE in FE institutions, i.e. large, general FECs as well as smaller specialist institutions. Without a more replete evidence base upon which to build an argument for change, it is questionable if colleges would necessarily volunteer to enter into dialogue concerning potential changes to HE in FE teachers' working conditions and to exploring their own institutional practice architectures. Whilst the increase in interest in gaining FDAP will stimulate some colleges to embrace change, this is likely to be those colleges that are large, and those with sizeable HE provision. For the very

small FECs with HE (such as Shireland College) where gaining FDAP is less likely to be a realistic aspiration, the concern remains that they will continue to adopt a more generic approach whereby HE is required to fit in with the mainstream FE provision, with HE not being considered and managed differently. Given the competitive, marketised HE landscape in which they operate, I suggest that colleges may need inducements and/or external pressure for them to consider doing anything more than run HE largely in the same way as FE, i.e. standard teacher contracts, standard teaching hours etc. Assuming future findings broadly concur with findings from this study, it could serve to catalyze changes in terms of institutional practices and practice architectures. As such, college HE managers would need to seriously examine the nature of their HE and if their institutional practice architectures enabled or constrained it.

For validating university partners, I recommend that they pay closer attention to programmes being run at FECs and teaching HE awards in their name. As part of this, universities could be more rigorous in ensuring HE teachers at the college do have appropriate HE qualifications and HE teaching hours are broadly comparable with university HE teachers. Similarly, they could insist that HE teachers do receive HE-orientated teacher training/CPD, that they are supported to create a college HE research community, and to engage in scholarly activity and research. I outline particular recommendations for FECs with HE provision (including Shireland College) to consider and act upon next.

Recommendation 1 – Develop a college shared understanding of HE (time, physical spaces and artefacts)

In keeping with Schatzkian notions of the site, all FECs are recommended to provide physical spaces, resources and artefacts which will help both HE teachers and HE learners to assume and develop an HE identity. HEness (Lea and Simmons, 2012)

and ‘feeling’ like an HE teacher or an HE learner is connected to physical and symbolic artefacts within a site. This includes common rooms, classrooms, teacher offices, library and study areas and social spaces. By providing HE-specific spaces for teachers and learners, the sociomaterial impacts of FE physical and symbolic artefacts could be mitigated. Attention to language and to relationships between HE staff and HE learners should also be explored. Redefining relationships to characterise HE learners as independent, and as learning partners and co-producers of knowledge are advocated. This is particularly important when learners may have previously spent two or three years at a site as an FE student. Learners can leave in July and return as an HE learner in September, only to find they are in the same classrooms with many of their FE peers, and are being taught by the same teachers they had at FE level. Therefore, establishing new parameters and setting expectations of HE teaching and learning within a culture of collegiality and scholarship is advocated. This should be extended to all staff and learners within an FEC. To avoid dissonance, everyone should be aware of, and celebrate the diversity of the FE and HE provision. A key issue to resolve is that of time and teaching hours. It is recommended that a compromise with teaching hours for HE teachers is considered. In larger colleges some weighted work loading is in place for HE teachers. This recognises the additional time that can be required in researching and preparing HE classes and assessing HE work. Further, though predominantly in larger colleges, some time recognition is given to enable HE teachers to engage in scholarly activity and/or PG study / HE CPD. Affording time to develop selves as HE teachers is a key part of creating a scholarly college community. But this needs to be considered within the specific context of the FEC as a site, and should include how an HE teacher identity can be supported and developed for teachers with a dual role of being both an HE and an FE teacher. This could include how HE teachers are supported within a multiple-selves context, and how they move between these two distinct identity roles.

Whilst sensitive to teachers who do not teach HE and the potential for concern for perceived inequity between FE and HE, dissonance could be minimised through reciprocal understanding of their unique functions and aims and resource requirements. Therefore any element of competition or of concerns regarding inferiority or inequity could be removed.

Recommendation 2 – Peer review of HE teaching and HE teacher mentoring

This study clearly illustrated the influence of Ofsted and classroom observations upon the ways in which teachers enacted their HE pedagogic practices. Used as a "summative assessment tool or disciplinary mechanism" (O'Leary and Wood, 2017, p.588), observations using Ofsted criteria for HE caused anxiety and concern for teachers, and contributed to them enacting pedagogies of compliant 'gaming' in order to avoid management censure (Fletcher, 2015). The absence of the capacity for teachers to input into the observation process, or to use it as an opportunity for professional and developmental dialogue with an appropriately trained and experienced peer, reduced the observation process to that of a one-way audit and measurement exercise. To counter negative influences upon HE pedagogic practice enactment, the introduction of peer review for HE teaching is advocated. Whilst it is used in some FECs for HE teaching, it is usually restricted to larger colleges and is not widespread across the HE in FE sector. Therefore, and in concert with the rest of the HE sector, using peer review rather than Ofsted criteria for HE observations would remove the punitive aspects of observations and would give HE teachers greater freedom to express themselves and their agency as HE teachers. This is not to disregard Ofsted or its role in their FE teacher lives, but it would serve to empower HE teachers to have the courage and confidence to be able to enact different pedagogic approaches in their HE classes. This would signal the recognition and acceptance that, by not adopting an Ofsted '4 part lesson plan', HE teachers were

not in some way ‘doing it wrong’ or likely to face sanction or condemnation by college management. By adopting peer observation as a collaborative and developmental opportunity within a scholarly community of HE teachers, HE teachers would have greater trust and autonomy to enact creative and challenging HE pedagogies without fear of censure (ibid.). This arguably more democratic approach would facilitate teachers in developing their HE identities and themselves as reflective HE teachers. As a consequence, this greater autonomy and freedom would benefit their HE learners and help to create a differentiated HE atmosphere within HE classrooms.

As part of a wider with peer review approach to develop HE teachers, the introduction of mentoring to support HE teacher development is also recommended. In concert with HE teacher education/training, experienced HE mentors could be used to facilitate HE teachers to reflect upon peer observation and HE teacher education/training as a means of supporting on-going development. As part of a college wide scholarly community, mentors could help HE teachers, particularly novice/inexperienced ones, to explore how they could create challenging and transformational learning spaces for their HE learners. Mentors could help HE teachers to become initiated into the college HE community and support them to familiarise themselves with the discourse of the wider HE sector. In colleges where no suitably experienced HE mentors exist, those from other college consortium partners or those from the partner university could be used to embed and foster a supportive, collegial HE culture.

Recommendation 3 – HE Teacher education

Connected with the recommendation of peer review is the recommendation that HE in FE teachers should receive teacher education or training aligned to HE teaching and learning. The QAA (2014b) require HE teachers to be “knowledgeable and well qualified and trained” (p.2) in order that learners can “study their chosen subject(s) in

depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking" (p.24). Further, the QAA (2012) states that HE learners should be "active and independent learners" (p.6) and learn about "interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflection, not just on repetition of facts" (p.12). In order to facilitate the critical and creative thinking demanded by the QAA, HE teachers need to be supported in their own HE teacher development journey to enable them to teach in a way that enables their HE learners to achieve these higher order HE cornerstones. By providing HE aligned education and development, e.g. PG Cert HE, completion of HEA Fellowship etc., teachers would be given the opportunity to develop greater philosophical awareness in order to interrogate and reflect upon their position as a teacher of HE. Gaining greater understanding of themselves and establishing their worldview as HE teachers would inform their HE teaching and enhance their relationships with HE learners. These new insights and understandings would help to shift conceptions of HE as merely being 'something else to teach at a higher level', to HE as being philosophically different. This would help to make the intellectual 'gear change' from instrumental pedagogies as discussed, to more challenging and transformatory experiences for themselves and their HE learners. By empowering teachers to teach their HE free from the fetters of Ofsted, teachers would have more opportunities to become more critical, rather than compliant pedagogues (Burbules and Berk, 1999). In turn, this could contribute to creating a community of teachers who could challenge some of the wider hegemonic discourse and performance imperatives commonly found within FECs (Smith, 2017). Given that most HE in FE learners are from marginalised WP, non-traditional backgrounds, this arguably has even greater significance. Their relative lack of confidence and the negative labeling of deficit that many HE in FE learners can carry with them, needs to be challenged in order that HE learners can position themselves positively and be transformed by their HE studies. By recognising the strengths, individual contributions and the experiences these learners bring, unhelpful perceptions from the literature about the perceived

academic deficit HE in FE learners might have can be challenged. But in order to achieve this, HE teachers need to be trained and developed not just in HE classroom approaches and strategies, but in a more holistic and scholarly way to given them access to innovative and transformatory pedagogies (Kadi-Hanifi, 2009). In turn, this access would contribute to fostering a stronger sense of HE identity for both teachers and learners.

Recommendation 4 – PG education and subject expertise

A further recommendation is for FECs to support HE teachers to develop subject knowledge expertise. Within the prevailing employability discourse in HE, the dual professional role of HE in FE teachers and their vocational and occupational experience is recognised and valued. However, HE in FE teachers also need to be "knowledgeable and well qualified and trained" (QAA, 2014b, p.2) beyond vocational skills to prepare learners for the workplace. Supporting HE teachers (both financially and with study time) to undertake postgraduate studies (PG) (Masters/Doctoral level) is advocated as a means of empowering HE teachers to develop deep, current and confident subject knowledge. Higher level, advanced knowledge is essential for all HE teachers. Without it, HE in FE teachers risk being 'a page ahead of the students' as they adopt a "read to teach" (Feather, 2016b, p.708) approach, which the HE in FE literature has reported. Undertaking PG studies would help HE teachers to establish their credibility, give them confidence, and develop an academic profile, all of which are connected with developing an HE identity (Davis, 2014). By engaging in PG studies and/or on-going subject updating and CPD, HE teachers would be exposed to knowledge frontiers, to contestable knowledge, and to new knowledge and practices, which could be used to inform their HE teaching (Lea and Simmons, 2012). By exposing HE learners to research informed/evidenced teaching, HE learners would have the opportunity to develop as "active and independent learners"

(QAA, 2012, p.6) and learn about “interpretation, analysis and synthesis underpinned by reflection, not just on repetition of facts” (p.12). Confident HE teachers with secure and up to date subject knowledge would be better placed to support their HE learners by virtue of their own personal experience of engagement with studies and relevant literature (Solvason and Elliott, 2013). Confidence and familiarity with relevant literature and research could also aid HE teachers in moving away from knowledge as being fixed and as something to be transmitted, to knowledge as contestable and to be questioned and challenged with their learners in the HE classroom. Supporting PG study/CPD would expose teachers and learners to new knowledge thresholds and to new, deeper levels of knowledge and understanding. In so doing, both teachers and learners experience would be more transformatory.

Recommendation 5 – Developing a scholarly college community and supporting SoTL

As discussed, HE in FE is currently going through a ‘turn’ to scholarship, predominantly through the promotion and adoption of SoTL (see *inter alia* Healey et al., 2014; AoC, 2015). Whilst this is welcomed and supported, it is likely that this turn will be more visible and/or enthusiastically embraced in larger FECs with greater HE provision, and in FECs with, or aspiring to gain FDAP. The recommendation is that this turn should be embraced by all FECs offering HE irrespective of size and number of HE teachers and learners. As stated by the QAA (2012) Quality Code (B3), “Scholarship and research lie at the heart of higher education” (p.13). Whilst notions of research and scholarship are likely to manifest themselves differently at a college when compared to a research-intensive university, the underlying premise that all HE should be underpinned and informed by scholarship and research is clear. In order for HE in FE teachers to be able to participate in this turn, FE colleges need to endorse and support it, and HE teachers need to be provided with development

and time to enhance their skills in order for them to effectively undertake scholarly activity/research (QAA, 2015a).

It is recommended that colleges endorse and support SoTL within a community of scholarship. As discussed, supporting PG study and HE teacher education would provide some of the essential building blocks of a scholarly community. Further support could be provided through facilitating HE teachers to become part of an internal college HE community, and the external HE community. Connected with developing an HE identity, being familiar with the discourse and the wider HE community is essential. For FECs with a university partner, collaborative research and scholarship groups could be set up with joint initiatives for teachers in both institutions to work together. Access to in-house university pedagogy and/or subject training and events could be extended to FE partners to facilitate HE teachers in developing research identities and expertise. Where universities have multiple FE partners, HE teacher groups from partner colleges could collaborate with the university and with each other to create a larger scholarly community of practice of HE teachers.

Recommendations for an internal college HE community include having a designated research/scholarship coordinator/mentor (as some larger colleges do, many as part of the AoC Scholarship Project), fostering cross college HE teacher networks through lunchtime seminars, support and guidance regarding how to access funding for projects, how to write papers and presentations, and instigating college based research projects. Researching and disseminating findings to college HE peers would be a positive way forward to re-drawing the boundaries of what HE in FE teachers can and are increasingly expected to do. By developing HE teachers as scholarly practitioners and researchers, and integrating them into a community of practice of HE scholarship, this would empower and transform HE teachers, their HE

teaching, and the quality of HEness within an FEC (QAA, 2015a). For vocational HE subject areas with a limited evidence based upon which to draw, e.g. animal/equine/veterinary nursing studies, developing HE teachers as researchers and scholars would enable them to become creators of new knowledge. This would empower them by contributing to the body of knowledge, and would enrich their teaching to include, that which was research informed/evidenced, rather than teaching only existing knowledge (Young, 2013).

This creation of new knowledge could also include contributions from HE learners. In concert with the turn to scholarship for HE teachers, notions of students as partners and as co-producers of knowledge has garnered increased interest and support in the HE sector generally, and in HE in FE specifically. By re-defining the HE learner in this way, their HE learning experience is arguably going to be richer. By HE teachers and learners working together on research projects, HE learners can be redesignated not as passive consumers, but as collaborators in their HE learning. This would be an important contribution towards developing authentic HE identities, something which is especially significant for HE in FE learners who typically enter HE with less confidence, and often having experienced the more teacher directed and instrumental pedagogies characterised in the FE literature.

Clearly, these recommendations are proposed in the full knowledge of the realities of FECs with the managerialist and performative agendas as discussed within this thesis. Whilst cognisant of the marketised, neoliberal business models upon which FECs are constituted, and the tight control imposed upon teachers, these recommendations are proposed in good faith and with the aspiration that they would be seriously considered by college managers who are responsible for HE. As discussed, the broader HE policy landscape and discourse increasingly places teaching as central to the notion of a high quality HE student experience. Coupled

with the narrative of value for money, and the HE metrics and measuring culture, e.g. NSS, TEF, KIS etc., these external drivers could provide levers for some change in FECs. However, the prevailing and deeply sedimented discourse of Ofsted, performativity and accountability that constitutes the landscape within which all FECs are situated does present significant barriers for individual FECs with regard to countering their impacts. However, there is likely to be some scope for some of these recommendations to be enacted, but the extent to which this is possible will depend upon the practice architectures of the individual college, and upon the particularities of the teachers, managers and learners within them.

9.9 Thesis conclusion

Given that HE and FE are different kinds of institutions that serve to do often quite manifestly different things, HE in FE is never going to be analogous with university HE. Indeed, given its inherent distinctiveness, arguably nor should it be. However, it is perhaps not unreasonable to hope that HE in FE should be broadly comparable. As such, those teaching HE in a college should enjoy environments where they have some individual autonomy, where scholarly/research activity is viewed an essential aspect of the role, where HE teaching workloads are sustainable and where HE CPD and on-going PG training and development is available and actively supported by college managers. This study has brought to light the considerable challenges faced by HE teachers trying to teach HE confidently and effectively in an FEC. Significantly for a study exploring pedagogic practice, it has illustrated how the FEC practices and practice architectures do effect the nature of the HE enacted within the college. Whilst this was alluded to by Burkhill et al. (2008) (chapter 2, section 2.1.14), this study has been able to provide some evidence to that effect. In turn, this raises questions concerning the impact of these pedagogic practices upon the nature and the quality of the HE provided.

As a teacher who has maintained an interest in HE in FE for all of my professional life, I hope that this study might lead to newly created communicative spaces where new conversations regarding pedagogy and practice in the HE in FE sector might take place. Clearly, initiatives like the AoC Scholarship Project signify how the HE in FE landscape is beginning to be re-drawn to encompass ideologies of scholarship and collegiality, and this shift is to be applauded and supported. However, whilst HE in FE teachers provide a unique and very valuable HE experience to their HE learners, they do so often in environments that are turbulent and stressful, and in ones which do not necessarily understand or accept that HE has a different scope and purpose to FE. Further, evidence from the literature and from this study does report that despite the new SoTL direction and the turn to scholarship in HE in FE, there is still some way to go to gain universal acceptance from FE managers regarding the types of teachers, teaching and teaching spaces which HE needs if it is to provide challenging and transformatory HE. The development of new communicative spaces could afford HE in FE teachers' enhanced opportunities for dialogue and critical reflection (Duckworth et al., 2017) within college sites that are supportive of the notion of critical pedagogies, social justice and of SoTL. Further, the creation of such spaces could serve as a primer to facilitate the shift away from enactment of more risk averse, intrumental HE pedagogic practices within spaces where HE learners are arguably more passive, to those, which give access to powerful, 'really useful knowledge' (Avis, 2002) in a scholarly and challenging way in order to engage, empower and transform HE teachers and their HE learners.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: 2015 Ofqual Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF)

Level 1 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 1 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has basic factual knowledge of a subject and/or knowledge of facts, procedures and ideas to complete well-defined routine tasks and address simple problems; and Is aware of aspects of information relevant to the area of study or work.	Use basic cognitive and practical skills to complete well-defined routine tasks and procedures. Select and use relevant information. Identify whether actions have been effective.
Level 2 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 2 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has knowledge and understanding of facts, procedures and ideas in an area of study or field of work to complete well-defined tasks and address straightforward problems. Can interpret relevant information and ideas. Is aware of a range of information that is relevant to the area of study or work.	Select and use relevant cognitive and practical skills to complete well-defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems. Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions. Identify how effective actions have been.
Level 3 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 3 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has factual, procedural and theoretical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to complete tasks and address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Can interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Is aware of the nature of the area of study or work. Is aware of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or work.	Identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills, methods and procedures to address problems that while well-defined, may be complex and non-routine. Use appropriate investigation to inform actions. Review how effective methods and actions have been.
Level 4 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 4 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has practical, theoretical or technical knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to address problems that are well-defined but complex and non-routine. Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas. Is aware of the nature of approximate scope of the area of study or work. Has an informed awareness of different perspectives or approaches within the area of study or	Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined. Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

work.	
Level 5 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 5 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts. Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.	Determine, adapt and use appropriate methods, cognitive and practical skills to address broadly defined, complex problems. Use relevant research or development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results.
Level 6 Knowledge descriptor (the holder…)	Level 6 Skills descriptor (the holder can…)
Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them. Can critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas.	Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors. Use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications.

(Ofqual, 2015, pp.6–7)

Appendix 2: UK Standard Industrial Classification for Landbased

The term landbased is broad and encompasses a wide range of businesses and pursuits**.** As an occupational category, the UK Standard Industrial Classification (UK SIC) does not identify landbased per se. Rather, it is represented within the Agriculture, Hunting and Forestry category, which covers:

- Growing of crops; market gardening; horticulture
- Farming of animals
- Growing of crops combined with farming of animals (mixed farming)
- Agricultural and animal husbandry service activities, except veterinary activities
- Hunting, trapping and game propagation including related service activities
- Forestry, logging and related service activities (www.openfields.org.uk, n.d.)

Appendix 3: LANTRA Landbased Occupational Areas

Land management and production
Agriculture Crops and Livestock
Aquaculture
Fencing
Floristry
Land Based Engineering
Production Horticulture
Animal health and welfare
Animal Care
Animal Technology
Equine
Farriery
Veterinary activities (Professions Allied to Veterinary Trade including veterinary nursing)
Environmental industries
Environmental Conservation
Fisheries management
Game and wildlife
Horticulture, landscaping and sports turf

(www.Lantra.co.uk/careers/industries, n.d.)

Appendix 4: Search Terms for Initial Literature Review

HE in FE • HE in FE teaching • HE in FE pedagogy • HE in FE teaching styles • HE in FE teaching approaches • HE in FE teaching practices	**CBHE** • CBHE teaching • CBHE pedagogy • CBHE teaching styles • CBHE teaching approaches • CBHE teaching practices
College based higher education • College based higher education teaching • College based higher education pedagogy • College based higher education teaching styles • College based higher education teaching approaches • College based higher education teaching practices	**College based HE** • College based HE teaching • College based HE pedagogy • College based HE teaching styles • College based HE teaching approaches • College based HE teaching practices
CHE • CHE teaching • CHE pedagogy • CHE teaching styles • CHE teaching approaches • CHE teaching practices	**Landbased** • Landbased teaching • Landbased pedagogy • Landbased teaching styles • Landbased teaching approaches • Landbased teaching practices

Equine • Equine teaching • Equine pedagogy • Equine teaching styles • Equine teaching approaches • Equine teaching practices	**Animal Studies** • Animal studies teaching • Animal studies pedagogy • Animal studies teaching styles • Animal studies teaching approaches • Animal studies teaching practices
Animal Care • Animal care teaching • Animal care pedagogy • Animal care teaching styles • Animal care teaching approaches • Animal care teaching practices	**Animal Management** • Animal management teaching • Animal management pedagogy • Animal management teaching styles • Animal management teaching approaches • Animal management teaching practices
Veterinary Nursing • Veterinary nursing teaching • Veterinary nursing pedagogy • Veterinary nursing teaching styles • Veterinary nursing teaching approaches • Veterinary nursing teaching practices	**Vet Nursing** • Vet nursing teaching • Vet nursing pedagogy • Vet nursing teaching styles • Vet nursing teaching approaches • Vet nursing teaching practices

Appendix 5: Research journal entry after initial interview with Pat

I was quite nervous about doing the 1st interview today. Even though I had done some in the pilot, this felt more pressurized, like it was more real. I am really doing a PhD! I think it went well, Pat was very chatty, so there were no awkward pauses, the conversations flowed easily. I enjoyed it, it was quite a buzz at times, but it was quite draining actually – it went on for a good hour. I thought it would be more of a quick run through the biography, but she was keen to talk and it was sometimes hard to keep focused and really tune in 100% of the time. I did wonder if I might have led her in some way? I wondered if my body language did maybe give clues that I agreed with her. I felt this when she was talking about the college being small and everyone living in each others pockets. This was exactly how I remember the landbased college I had worked in. Tiny with everyone knowing everyone's business. She seemed a bit deferential to me (absolutely no need!!) and said 2 or 3 times that she was sorry if her answers were rubbish and mentioned that she didn't know about universities because she had not been. I don't want there to be any power thing going on where they won't be open and honest because they are worried about how I might perceive them? I wonder if I need to try to keep a more 'neutral' appearance? But I want to encouraging and to show empathy. I will see how things go next when I interview Hermione.

Appendix 6: Excerpt from "Us and them" initial code early memo version 1

"Us and them" – initial code. It defines division, dissonance between teachers – those on 1 side with graduate status and those on the other with professional quals but no degree, the 'old guard'. When these kinds of courses first started there were no degrees so lecturers were usually instructors and nurses. But over the years as equine type degrees have emerged there is a new breed? Of landbased lecturers with degrees. They usually have professional quals too. Significantly, old style can't teach on degree. They tend to be older and more experienced teachers. Academic v vocational divide? Do they understand HE? Can they if they have not done it themselves?

This seems to be such a strong almost emotional thing that they have revealed. This seems to be really strong and important. They are explicit about there being an issue. Pat seemed acutely aware of it, almost a bit embarrassed? Uncomfortable? but not appearing to be angry? Like she sort of understood where they were coming from, not wanting to rock the boat. Hermione was much more 'tough luck' and short shrift about it, like she thinks they need to get a degree and stop complaining about it? Who is generating the us and them divide? The HE teachers or the college? Or the FE teachers? Is it about people being divided to control them in some way? Interesting that Hermione mentioned gender. Is this significant? All of the animal, horse & VN teachers are female. The FE teachers are middle aged, some having been at Shireland for years. the grads are mainly in late 20s-late 30s, most quite novice teachers, first teaching job. could this mean something? I need to follow the us and them code up with the others when I interview them to see if this is something they recognise. I need to see how this relates to my RQ, does it in any way impact the way the teach HE?

Appendix 7: Research Ethics Scrutiny

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

Research Ethics Scrutiny (Annex to RS1 form)

SECTION A To be completed by the candidate

Registration No:

Candidate:EVE RAPLEY

Research Institute: EDUCATION

Research Topic: **A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches across the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies**

External Funding:

The candidate is required to summarise in the box below the ethical issues involved in the research proposal and how they will be addressed. In any proposal involving human participants the following should be provided:

- clear explanation of how informed consent will be obtained,
- how will confidentiality and anonymity be observed,
- how will the nature of the research, its purpose and the means of dissemination of the outcomes be communicated to participants,
- how personal data will be stored and secured
- if participants are being placed under any form of stress (physical or mental) identify what steps are being taken to minimise risk

If protocols are being used that have already received University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) ethical approval then please specify. Roles of any collaborating institutions should be clearly identified. Reference should be made to the appropriate professional body code of practice.

- Permission to interview staff and students will be sought in writing from the college Principal/other representative from the senior management team.
- Informed consent will be sought from all students who will be in classes where I will be observing as well as those involved in focus groups. Focus groups will only be with HE students (who will be aged 18 and over). A lecturer will be present (teaching) when I observe FE and HE classes.
- Students will be made clear that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw from the process at any time.

- Any comments or quotes from students will be given a fictitious name and/or code within the study.
- All students will be over 16, therefore CRB clearance will not be required
- Staff and students will be given written information about the study and their role within in it. They will be asked to sign that they agree to participate. Their anonymity will be assured and preserved.
- Similarly for the staff, I will not name them or directly attribute any quotes to them within the study.
- The name of the college(s) will remain anonymous and will be given a fictitious name and/or code.
- All interviews and questionnaires are voluntary and anonymised
- All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure the security of research data

All data pertaining to the interviews, observations, focus groups etc. will be available to me and stored securely

Answer the following question by deleting as appropriate:

1. Does the study involve vulnerable participants or those unable to give informed consent (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, your own students)?**NO**

2. Will the study require permission of a gatekeeper for access to participants (e.g. schools, self-help groups, residential homes)?No

3. Will it be necessary for participants to be involved without consent (e.g. covert observation in non-public places)?**No**

4. Will the study involve sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, substance abuse)?**No**

5. Will blood or tissue samples be taken from participants?**No**

6. Will the research involve intrusive interventions (e.g. drugs, hypnosis, physical exercise)?**No**

7. Will financial or other inducements be offered to participants (except reasonable expenses)?**No**

8. Will the research investigate any aspect of illegal activity? **No**

9. Will participants be stressed beyond what is normal for them? **No**

10. Will the study involve participants from the NHS (e.g. patients or staff)?**No**

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions or if you consider that there are other significant ethical issues then details should be included in your summary above. If you have answered yes to Question 1 then a clear justification for the importance of the research

Appendix 8: Letter Sent to College Principals

19th March 2012

Dear Principal

RE: PhD study in Animal/Equine studies

I am a Senior Lecturer at the University of Bedfordshire and am undertaking a part time PhD based within the University of Bedfordshire Education Research Group. My background is in Landbased education and I am currently an External Examiner in a number of institutions for Animal/Equine FdSc and BSc programmes. I am looking to secure Landbased colleges to collaborate with me in order to conduct my research.

My PhD title is "A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies". I hope to explore how teachers who teach both FE and HE Animal/Equine approach their teaching within these two distinct pedagogic areas.

I have enclosed a brief overview of the study aims as well as an outline of the methodology. If your college would be willing to take part I would be delighted to hear from you. The proposal has been subject to ethics scrutiny by the relevant university committees and has been approved. All participants and colleges will be given an anonymity code in order to preserve their identity. In addition, all collaborating institutions will be given access to the final thesis.

I am hoping to undertake pilot work in the summer term of 2012 and would anticipate undertaking field work for a few days in the college to collect data. If you would be willing to participate please let me know. Alternatively, if you would prefer to be part of the main study (field work is anticipated during 2013/2014), I can ensure you are included.

As a member of the Landbased education community, I am passionate about this research area and very much hope that you will consider supporting this work in order to enhance HE animal and equine education for all stakeholders.

If you have any questions or queries I would be delighted to speak to you. I can be contacted at eve.rapley@beds.ac.uk or on XXXXX XXX XXX.

Best wishes

Eve Rapley

Appendix 9: Overview of the Study (Sent to College Principals)

PhD study title:

"A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies"

Researcher: Eve Rapley MSc BSc PGCE (FAHE) FHEA

University of Bedfordshire (Senior Lecturer and Curriculum Enhancement Co-ordinator – *Centre for Learning Excellence*)

University of Hertfordshire (Visiting Lecturer – *School of Medical and Life Sciences* and Subject Moderator for FdSc Animal and Equine programmes for partner Landbased college)

External Examiner (currently and previously) for FdSc and BSc Animal and Equine programmes for a number of UK HEIs running courses at Landbased colleges

E: eve.rapley@beds.ac.uk
T: XXXXX XXX XXX

Aim(s) and main objectives of the investigation

Through teacher interviews and classroom observations, the aim of this PhD study is to explore HE in FE pedagogies within an Animal/Equine Studies context. The study is specifically exploring teachers who teach both FE *and* HE Animal/Equine Studies within an FE Landbased college environment.

The aim is to critically examine *what* pedagogical approaches are adopted by HE in FE teachers. The study aims to explore *why* particular pedagogic approaches are adopted. A further aspect seeks to explore the specific Animal/Equine context in order to assess the nature and level of impact and influence upon HE in FE pedagogy.

Why conduct this research?

- Dearth of Landbased sector specific pedagogy research
- HE in FE is main model for FdSc/degree delivery of Animal/Equine HE programmes
- HE in FE pedagogy research generally is very limited
- Government policy clearly indicates the desire for greater numbers of HE provision to be delivered via FECs

It is anticipated that this study would add value in an original way to HE in FE research generally and Landbased studies specifically.

I have already completed a pilot study at a Landbased college in the UK and am now looking to move into the main PhD phase of my data collection in autumn 2013/spring 2014. The research methodology is centered on an interpretive philosophy that seeks not to prove or disprove a hypothesis, nor to judge or assess the value or quality of HE in FE provision. Rather, it seeks to shine a light on those doing the job; those who teach HE and FE, in order to illuminate their experiences and understand their approach to teaching HE within an FE Landbased college.

Proposed Methodology

1. Observing teacher participants teaching both an FE Animal/Equine and an HE Animal/Equine class for 3 consecutive weeks
2. Teacher participants completing a 1-1 interview (60 minutes approximately) with the researcher
3. College HE Manager/Director completing a 1-1 interview (60 minutes approximately) with the researcher

In addition teacher participants will be asked to submit a brief CV prior to commencing the classroom observations.

It is anticipated that findings of the research will be published in sector/general learning and teaching publications upon completion of the PhD.

The study is funded by the University of Bedfordshire and has been approved by the University of Bedfordshire research ethics committee. The colleges involved are granted full anonymity, as are all teacher and student participants.

Appendix 10: Participant Information Sheet (Lecturer/Teacher)

Participant Information Sheet (Lecturer/teacher)

PhD thesis title: *A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies*

Researcher: Eve Rapley

Funding institution: University of Bedfordshire

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You are being invited to take part in a PhD research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask me (contact details are below) if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this PhD study is to explore teacher beliefs, and approaches to teaching lecturers/teachers use when teaching FE and HE animal/equine studies/veterinary nursing students. I want to examine these in order to ascertain if the approaches employed are different or not, within the FE and the HE contexts. Should differences exist, I wish to explore how these differences manifest themselves, why they have developed, and what influences have gone towards
~~~~~

creating a differentiation in practice between FE and HE teaching approaches. This study is an interpretive and exploratory one; it seeks to shine a light on classroom HE in FE pedagogies in the animal/equine area, and is not designed to test or to prove/disprove any hypotheses.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate because you are a lecturer/teacher who teaches both FE and HE animal/equine studies within a college (predominantly FE) setting.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you take part and subsequently decide not to continue you are entitled to cease being involved with immediate effect. Should this occur, any data pertaining to your involvement will not be included within the study and will destroyed.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part there are 3 elements which you will be required to participate in:

a) Taking part in a short initial briefing with me prior to classroom observations commencing
b) Having FE and HE animal/equine/veterinary nursing classes observed by me during a defined, and mutually agreed time period
c) Taking part in an an individual, one to one interview following the conclusion of the classroom observations (approximtely 60–75 minutes)

In addition to these 3 elements, particpants are asked to consent (should the need arise), to participate in further, follow up discussions to clarify anything mentioned in the interviews/observed during the classroom sessions.

Prior to beginning data collection, all participants will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read the instructions and that they are happy to be involved in the study. This is known as *Informed Consent* and I am requried to have this permission from you (and from everyone in the classroom) before I undertake my observations. Student permissions will be gained using a separate permission form.

Observing more than once will allow my presence to be habituated within the class which is intended to improve the trustworthiness and authenticity of the observation data generated. The lessons will be recorded via a digital voice recorder (plus a back up recorder in event of there being a technology failure). In addition, field notes will be taken. I will be taking notes about approaches used, rather than judging if the lesson is 'good' or 'bad'. I am not there to 'mark' the lesson or your abilities as a teacher, rather I am interested in the approaches taken by you. I will be acting purely as an observer.

The individual, one to one interview will take place at your college once the classroom observations have taken place and will be recorded *via* a digital voice recorder (plus a back up recorder in event of there being a technology failure). Your college will be given a ficticious name within the thesis. You will be allocated an anonymity code which will ensure any comments that you make will not be able to be directly identified as having come from you. All of the data generated via the interview will remain anonymous. A typed transcript of the interview will be provided for the participant in order that they can check and approve it before the data can be used for analysis. I will not disclose any information from the discussions with

anyone apart from my supervisors. In this case I will not disclose the names of individual lecturers/teachers.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The main disadvantage that I have identified is the time taken to complete the elements.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Although there are no direct benefits of taking part, it is anticipated that, as a participant, you will contribute to an increase in knowledge which will inform practice within animal/equine/veterinary nursing (landbased) Higher Education for all stakeholders. Teachers who participated in the pilot study reported that they found the process to be an interesting experience, and served as a useful opportunity to reflect upon their own practice. In addition, it is anticipated that the study will be beneficial in expanding HE in FE teaching and learning in a more general, HE sector context. Upon completion of the study I will contact participants to provide them with details of how to access a copy of the thesis via the University of Bedfordshire online repository.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact the University of Bedfordshire's independant research contact:

Dr Sara Spencer

Postgraduate School Graduate School - Research and Enterprise

University of Bedfordshire

Room E303, Park Square,

Luton LU 1 3JU

Email: sara.spencer@beds.ac.uk

My Director of Studies (PhD research supervisor) is Dr Andrea Raiker.

Dr Andrea Raiker

School of Education

University of Bedfordshire

Polhill Avenue

Bedford

MK41 9EA

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information and data collected from you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only myself (the researcher) and my supervisor will have access to such information.

All data will be kept securely and stored under the terms of the Data Protection Act, as well as abiding with the University of Bedfordshire regulations.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be analysed and subsequently included in the final thesis for the award of a PhD. It is hoped that the findings will be used to improve understanding of the approaches to teaching and pedagogies used for teaching HE within an FE context. The results may be disseminated to a wider audience where appropriate through conferences and publications.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This research is being conducted solely by the researcher, Eve Rapley, who is funded by by The Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE) at the University of Bedfordshire.

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Eve Rapley

Senior Lecturer & Curriculum Enhancement Co-ordinator

Centre for Learning Excellence

University of Bedfordshire

D009, Park Square

Luton LU1 3JU

Email: Eve.rapley@beds.ac.uk

Telephone: 01582 743188

Please use this postal/email address to return your CV to me 7 days before commencement of classroom observations.

Thank you for your interest in this research

Appendix 11: Lecturer Participant Informed Consent Record

Lecturer participant Informed Consent Record

PhD thesis title: *A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies*

Researcher: Eve Rapley

Funding institution: University of Bedfordshire

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Please sign to confirm that you give your informed consent for me to observe you teaching FE and HE classes. In addition to this, you agree to take part in a short initial briefing, followed by a one to one interview after the classroom observation period. If the need arises, you agree to participate in further, follow up discussions to clarify anything mentioned in the interviews/observed during the classroom sessions. Prior to signing please ensure you have read the participant information sheet, which gives details about the study and its aims.

~~~~~

Name (print):

Name (signature):

Date:

Thank you for your interest and participation in this research

Appendix 12: Participant Information Sheet (FE student)

Participant Information Sheet (Further Education (FE) students classroom observations)

PhD thesis title: *A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies*

Researcher: Eve Rapley

Funding institution: University of Bedfordshire

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You are being invited to take part in a PhD research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this PhD study is to explore what approaches to teaching lecturers/teachers use when teaching FE and HE animal/equine studies students. I want to examine these approaches in order to ascertain if the approaches employed are different or not, within the FE and the HE contexts.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate because you are currently studying on a Further Education (FE) animal/equine course. Your lecturer/teacher (who teaches both Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) animal/equine studies at your college), has agreed that I can observe their teaching. I will be focussing on observing your lecturer/teacher and their approaches and interactions within the
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classroom. I will not be observing students per se, or making any judgements about individual student behaviour, academic ability or any other potential feature; my focus will be on the lecturer/teacher and I would urge students to ignore and to disregard my presence.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you take part and subsequently decide not to continue you are entitled to leave the classroom at any time and cease being involved with immediate effect and without prejudice. Should this occur, any data pertaining to your involvement will not be included within the study and will be destroyed.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be required to participate in:

a) Having one of your FE animal/equine classes observed by me over a 3 week period

Prior to beginning data collection, all participants will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read the instructions and that they are happy to be involved in the study. This is known as Informed Consent and I am requried to have this permission from everyone in the classroom before I undertake my observations.

I intend to observe your lecturer/teacher teaching the same FE class over a 3 week period. Observing more than once will allow my presence in the classroom to become less obvious and intrusive. This is intended to improve the validity and authenticity of the observation data generated. The lessons will be recorded via a digital voice recorder (plus a back up recorder in event of there being a technology failure). In addition, field notes will be taken.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages to students who have their lessons observed by me.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Although there are no direct benefits of taking part, it is anticipated that, as a participant, you will contribute to an increase in knowledge which will inform practice within animal/equine Higher Education for all stakeholders. In addition, it is anticipated that the study will be beneficial in expanding HE in FE teaching and learning in a more general, HE sector context. Upon completion of the study I will contact your college to provide them with details of how to access a copy of my thesis via the University of Bedfordshire online repository.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact the University of Bedfordshire's independant research contact:

Dr Sara Spencer

Postgraduate School Graduate School - Research and Enterprise

University of Bedfordshire

Luton LU 1 3JU Email: sara.spencer@beds.ac.uk

My Director of Studies (PhD research supervisor) is Dr Andrea Raiker.

Dr Andrea Raiker

School of Education

University of Bedfordshire

Bedford MK41 9EA

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information and data collected during my classroom observations will be kept strictly confidential so that only myself (the researcher) and my supervisor will have access to such information.

All data will be kept securely and stored under the terms of the Data Protection Act, as well as abiding with the University of Bedfordshire regulations.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be analysed and subsequently included in the final thesis for the award of a PhD. It is hoped that the findings will be used to improve understanding of the approaches to teaching and pedagogies used for teaching HE within an FE context. The results may be disseminated to a wider audience where appropriate through conferences and publications.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This research is being conducted solely by the researcher, Eve Rapley, who is funded by by The Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE) at the University of Bedfordshire.

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Eve Rapley

Curriculum Enhancement Co-ordinator

Centre for Learning Excellence

University of Bedfordshire

D006, Park Square

Luton LU1 3JU

Email: Eve.rapley@beds.ac.uk Telephone: 01582 743188

Thank you for your interest in this research

Appendix 13: Participant Information Sheet (HE student)

Participant Information Sheet (Higher Education (HE) students classroom observations)

PhD thesis title: *A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies*

Researcher: Eve Rapley

Funding institution: University of Bedfordshire

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You are being invited to take part in a PhD research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please contact me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this PhD study is to explore what approaches to teaching lecturers/teachers use when teaching FE and HE animal/equine studies students. I want to examine these approaches in order to ascertain if the approaches employed are different or not, within the FE and the HE contexts.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to participate because you are currently studying on a Higher Education (HE) animal/equine course. An HE course includes Higher National Diploma (HND), Foundation Degree (FdSc) and Honours/Bachelors Degree (BSc). Your lecturer/teacher (who teaches both Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) animal/equine studies at your college), has agreed that I can observe
~~~~~

their teaching. I will be focussing on observing your lecturer/teacher and their approaches and interactions within the classroom. I will not be observing students per se, or making any judgements about individual student behaviour, academic ability or any other potential feature; my focus will be on the lecturer/teacher and I would urge students to ignore and to disregard my presence.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you take part and subsequently decide not to continue you are entitled to leave the classroom at any time and cease being involved with immediate effect and without prejudice. Should this occur, any data pertaining to your involvement will not be included within the study and will be destroyed.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part you will be required to participate in:

a) Having one of your HE animal/equine classes observed by me over a 3 week period

Prior to beginning data collection, all participants will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read the instructions and that they are happy to be involved in the study. This is known as Informed Consent and I am requried to have this permission from everyone in the classroom before I undertake my observations.

I intend to observe your lecturer/teacher teaching the same HE class over a 3 week period. Observing more than once will allow my presence in the classroom to become less obvious and intrusive. This is intended to improve the validity and authenticity of the observation data generated. The lessons will be recorded via a digital voice recorder (plus a back up recorder in event of there being a technology failure). In addition, field notes will be taken.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages to students who have their lessons observed by me.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Although there are no direct benefits of taking part, it is anticipated that, as a participant, you will contribute to an increase in knowledge which will inform practice within animal/equine Higher Education for all stakeholders. In addition, it is anticipated that the study will be beneficial in expanding HE in FE teaching and learning in a more general, HE sector context. Upon completion of the study I will contact your college to provide them with details of how to access a copy of my thesis via the University of Bedfordshire online repository.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact the University of Bedfordshire's independant research contact:

Dr Sara Spencer

Postgraduate School Graduate School - Research and Enterprise

University of Bedfordshire

Room E303, Park Square,

Luton LU 1 3JU

Email: sara.spencer@beds.ac.uk

My Director of Studies (PhD research supervisor) is Dr Andrea Raiker.

Dr Andrea Raiker

School of Education

University of Bedfordshire

Polhill Avenue

Bedford MK41 9EA

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information and data collected during my classroom observations will be kept strictly confidential so that only myself (the researcher) and my supervisor will have access to such information.

All data will be kept securely and stored under the terms of the Data Protection Act, as well as abiding with the University of Bedfordshire regulations.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be analysed and subsequently included in the final thesis for the award of a PhD. It is hoped that the findings will be used to improve understanding of the approaches to teaching and pedagogies used for teaching HE within an FE context. The results may be disseminated to a wider audience where appropriate through conferences and publications.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This research is being conducted solely by the researcher, Eve Rapley, who is funded by by The Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE) at the University of Bedfordshire.

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Eve Rapley
Curriculum Enhancement Co-ordinator
Centre for Learning Excellence
University of Bedfordshire
D006, Park Square
Luton LU1 3JU

Email: Eve.rapley@beds.ac.uk Telephone: 01582 743188

Thank you for your interest in this research

Appendix 14: Student Participant Informed Consent Record

Student Participant Informed Consent Record

PhD thesis title: *A Critical Review of Teacher Approaches at the FE/HE interface in Animal & Equine Studies*

Researcher: Eve Rapley

Funding institution: University of Bedfordshire

Please sign to confirm that you give your informed consent for me to observe one of your classes. Prior to signing please ensure you have read the participant information sheet that gives details about the study and its aims.

~~~~~

Name (print)	**Name (signature)**

Thank you for your interest and participation in this research
~~~~~

Appendix 15: 2013 Shireland College Ofsted Report

In the most recent (2013) Shireland College Ofsted report (covering FE provision only, level 1–3 including, but not exclusively animal/equine/veterinary nursing), the inspectors highlighted:

"In some lessons, teachers' expectations of advanced level learners are not high enough and learners' higher level thinking skills are insufficiently developed"
[need to]" Raise teachers' expectations of advanced level learners in lessons and support them to set challenging tasks, promote the development of higher level skills and ensure learners develop very good independent learning skills"
"Learners show good attitudes to learning and have productive relationships with teachers, assessors and support staff. However, sometimes teachers help learners too much rather than insisting they think and work things out for themselves"

For reasons of deductive disclosure, it is not possible to preserve the anonymity of Shireland College if the complete reference to these documents are made available within this thesis.

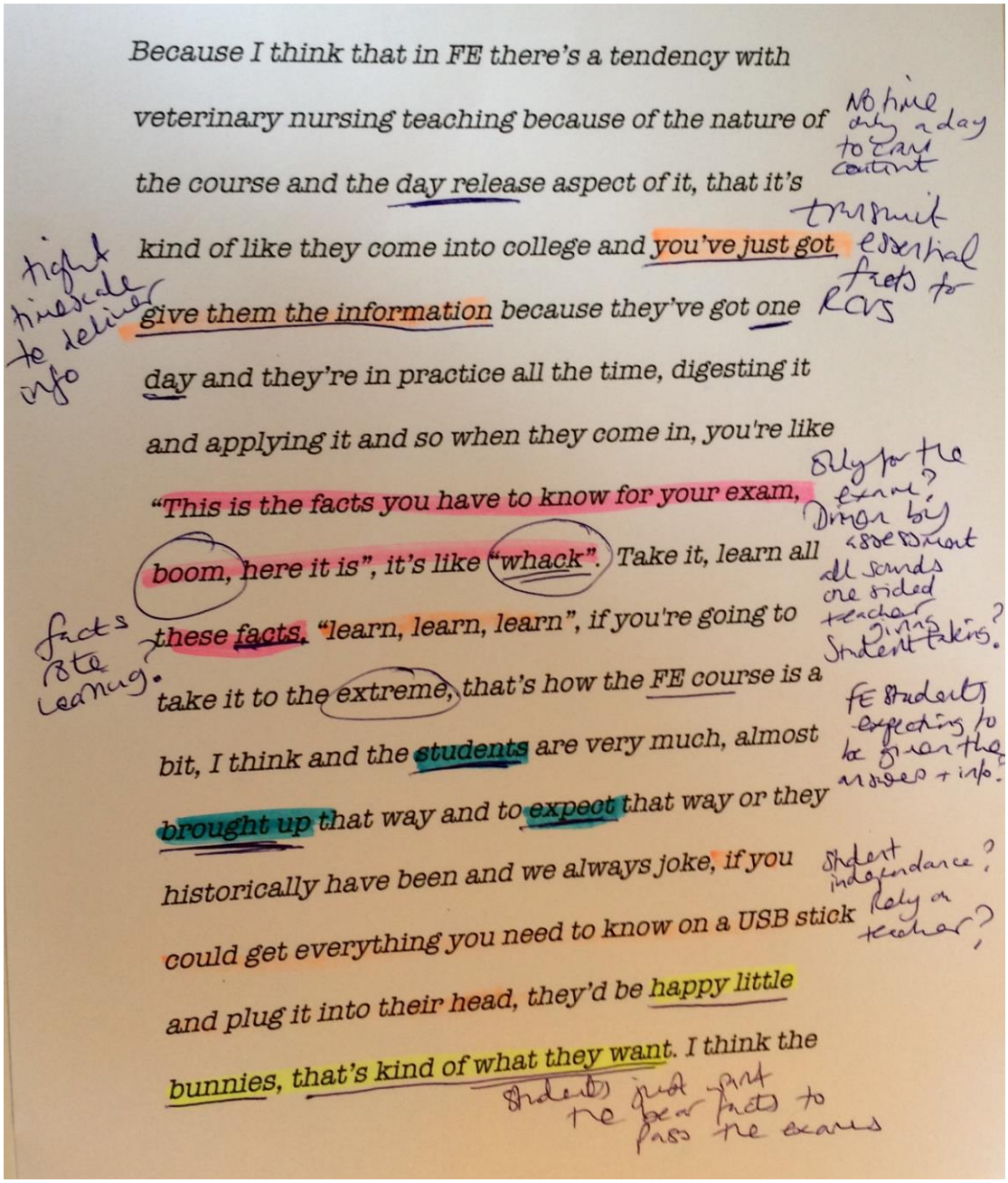
Appendix 16: 2010 Shireland College QAA IQER Report

The 2010 Shireland College QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) IQER (Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review) report (covering animal/equine/veterinary nursing HE provision, levels 4–5), the inspectors highlighted:

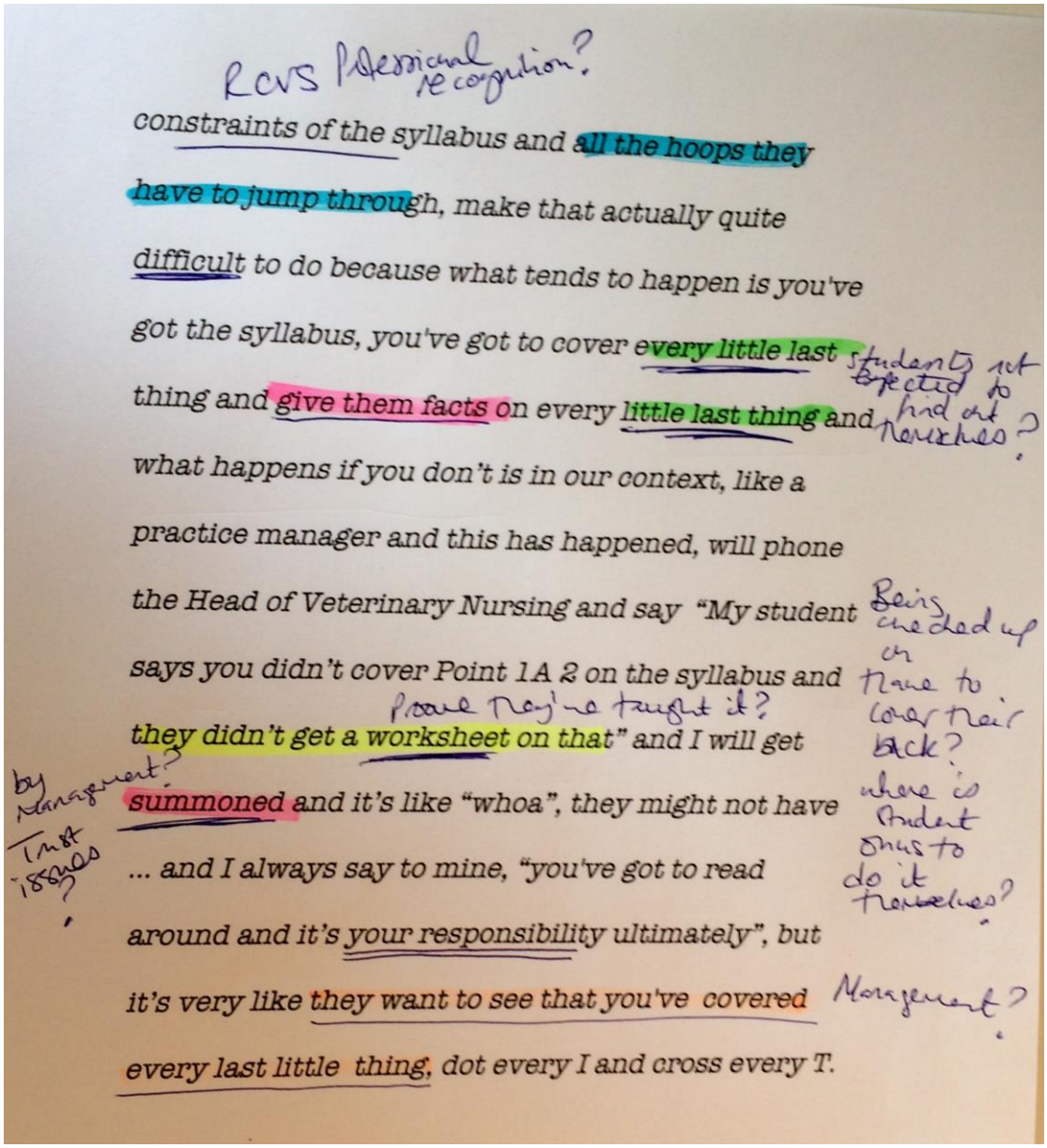
> *"The College itself does not have a formal policy on the academic or professional qualifications required for teaching at higher education level. The review team recommends that the College develops a policy to ensure staff teaching on higher education programmes are appropriately qualified.*

> *"Staff teaching on degree programmes are required to hold a first degree or higher and must be approved by the University. The review team found some instances of staff teaching on degree programmes who do not themselves have degrees. The College explained that these staff hold relevant professional qualifications and deliver practical input on veterinary or equine programmes".*

Appendix 17: Excerpt of pawing original transcript with initial codes from first interview with Jane



Because I think that in FE there's a tendency with veterinary nursing teaching because of the nature of the course and the day release aspect of it, that it's kind of like they come into college and you've just got give them the information because they've got one day and they're in practice all the time, digesting it and applying it and so when they come in, you're like "This is the facts you have to know for your exam, boom, here it is", it's like "whack". Take it, learn all these facts, "learn, learn, learn", if you're going to take it to the extreme, that's how the FE course is a bit, I think and the students are very much, almost brought up that way and to expect that way or they historically have been and we always joke, if you could get everything you need to know on a USB stick and plug it into their head, they'd be happy little bunnies, that's kind of what they want. I think the

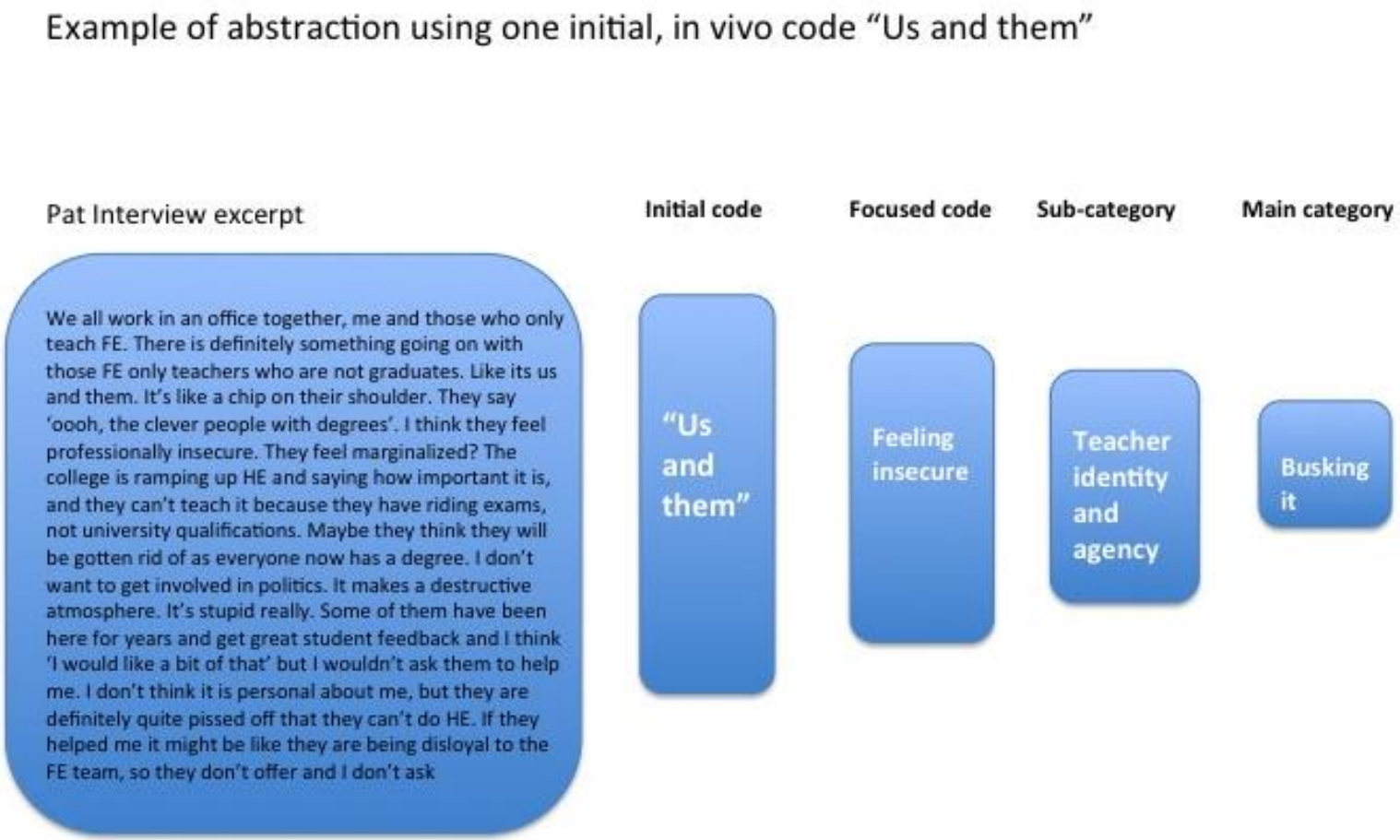

RCVS Professional recognition?
constraints of the syllabus and all the hoops they
have to jump through, make that actually quite
difficult to do because what tends to happen is you've
got the syllabus, you've got to cover every little last
thing and give them facts on every little last thing and
what happens if you don't is in our context, like a
practice manager and this has happened, will phone
the Head of Veterinary Nursing and say "My student
says you didn't cover Point 1A 2 on the syllabus and
they didn't get a worksheet on that" and I will get
summoned and it's like "whoa", they might not have
... and I always say to mine, "you've got to read
around and it's your responsibility ultimately", but
it's very like they want to see that you've covered
every last little thing, dot every I and cross every T.
Students not expected to find out themselves?
Being checked up on have to cover their back?
Please they've taught it?
by Management?
Trust issues?
where is student onus to do it themselves?
Management?

Appendix 18: Excerpt of original transcript with initial codes from first interview with Jane

Excerpt of original transcript from initial interview with Jane	Examples of initial codes
Because I think that in FE there's a tendency with veterinary nursing teaching because of the nature of the course and the day release aspect of it, that it's kind of like they come into college and you've just got give them the information because they've got one day and they're in practice all the time, digesting it and applying it and so when they come in, you're like "This is the facts you have to know for your exam, boom, here it is", it's like "whack". Take it, learn all these facts, "learn, learn, learn", if you're going to take it to the extreme, that's how the FE course is a bit, I think and the students are very much, almost brought up that way and to expect that way or they historically have been and we always joke, if you could get everything you need to know on a USB stick and plug it into their head, they'd be happy little bunnies, that's kind of what they want. I think the constraints of the syllabus and all the hoops they have to jump through, make that actually quite difficult to do because what tends to happen is you've got the syllabus, you've got to cover every little last thing and give them facts on every little last thing and what happens if you don't is in our context, like a practice manager and this has happened, will	Constraining intensive course design Vocational nature of the course Teaching to impart facts Transmitting knowledge Teaching to the test Implying its pressured Nature of FE students Students expecting to be taught a certain way Students wanting it easy Complying Syllabus constraining teaching Monitoring by senior staff Being reprimanded by senior staff Being accountable

phone the Head of Veterinary Nursing and say "My student says you didn't cover Point 1A 2 on the syllabus and they didn't get a worksheet on that" and I will get summoned and it's like "whoa", they might not have … and I always say to mine, "you've got to read around and it's your responsibility ultimately", but it's very like they want to see that you've covered every last little thing, dot every I and cross every T.	

Appendix 19: Example of abstraction



Appendix 20: Excerpt of original field notes from final HE class observation with Jane

To preserve anonymity, the name of the teacher and the teaching topic has been obscured.